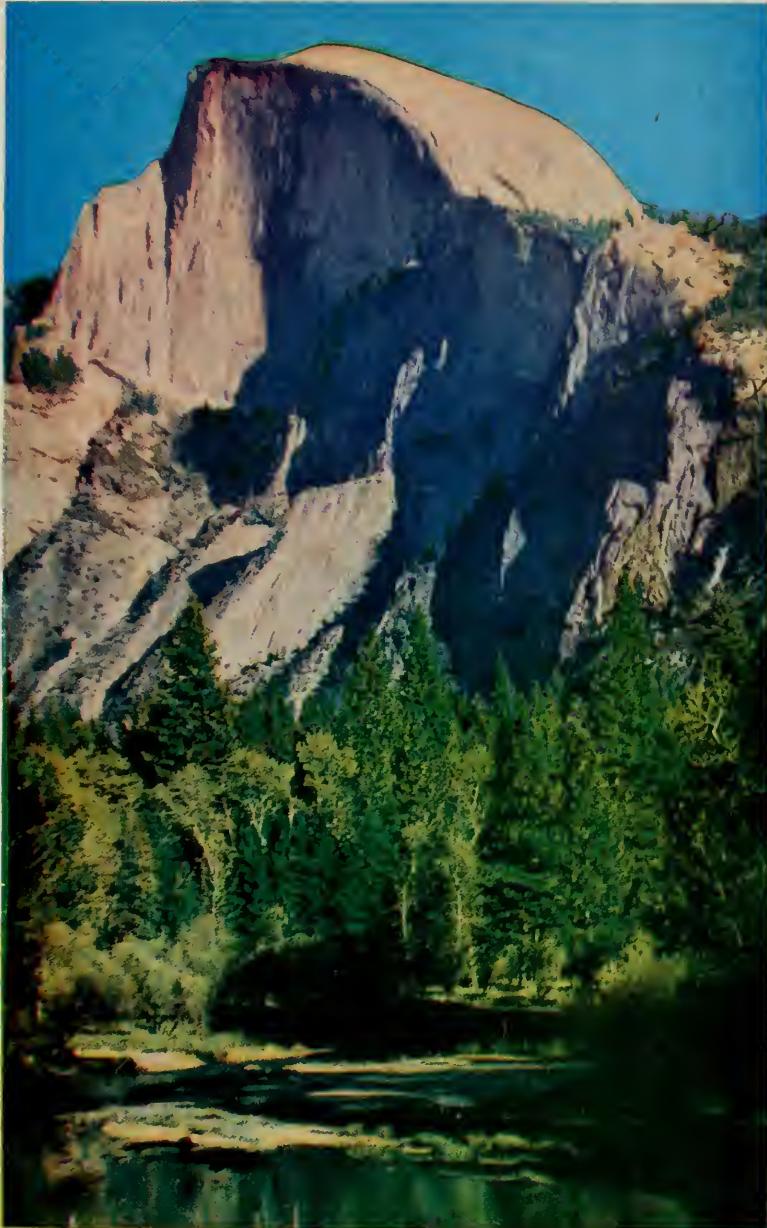


SELF-GUIDING  
AUTO TOUR



OF YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

SPECIAL ISSUE

YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES

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# y o s e m i t e

NATURE NOTES

*Since 1922, the monthly publication of the National Park Service and the Yosemite Natural History Association in Yosemite National Park.*

Vol. XXXV

No. 6

# Self-guiding Auto Tour of Yosemite National Park

By

Richard P. Ditton and Donald E. McHenry



IN COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.

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# WELCOME



John C. Preston

On behalf of the National Park Service I take pleasure in welcoming you as a visitor to Yosemite National Park. I know that your visit was planned to afford you and your party a unique and happy experience in this, one of the world's outstanding scenic areas. It is the purpose of this booklet to help you realize to the utmost the pleasures of this trip. Many will find time or inclination for seeing the park from auto roads only. Under these circumstances the use of this guide will bring a fuller understanding and appreciation of the essentials of the magnificent scenery which can be seen from the highway.

For those who are disposed to explore the wonders of Yosemite further, you are invited to travel along the high country trails and spend your nights camping out under the stars. In this manner will you be able to gain a more intimate knowledge of the park and its many superlative features. By this experience one will more fully understand and appreciate the fragile nature of a wilderness area. Detailed trail guides and maps to help you are available in the park.

This booklet is intended to help you learn more about Yosemite. It is based on the combined experience and knowledge of the park gained by Richard P. Ditton of the Yosemite Park and Curry Company through 14 years of residence in the area, and that of Donald E. McHenry, Park Naturalist for over 9 years, assisted extensively by members of the naturalist staff, especially Douglass H. Hubbard, Wayne W. Bryant, Ruth Glass and Helen Doty as well as by Laurence V. Degnan, and by helpful suggestions from National Park Service and Company officials.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John C. Preston".

John C. Preston, Superintendent

## A BRIEF STORY OF YOSEMITE

Yosemite National Park, one of our 28 scenic and scientific national parks and one of some 180 areas administered by the National Park Service, is world famous for the scenic grandeur of Yosemite Valley and its high Sierra country. It embraces about 1200 square miles with elevations ranging from foothills to alpine peaks over 13,000' high. Such differences in elevation account for the zone-like distribution of the 17 evergreens and 18 broad-leaf trees making up Yosemite's forests and to a degree its wildlife also. Deer are especially abundant in Yosemite Valley where they, with the bear, are often mistaken for tame animals. They are dangerous and park regulations forbid feeding them in the park.

Yosemite Valley was probably discovered by William Penn Abrams in 1849 during the gold rush days. It later came into national prominence through the 1855 reports of Dr. Lafayette H. Bunnell of the Mariposa Battalion under Major James D. Savage, and the extended writings of James M. Hutchings, John Muir, Starr King and many others who worked for its preservation. Because of growing public interest, John Conness, Senator from California, introduced into the Congress in 1864 a bill to set aside Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees as the Yosemite Grant. The bill was passed and signed by President Abraham Lincoln. Here was the first practical application of what was to grow into our great National Park System of today. It was given to the State of California to administer until 1905 when it was receded to the federal government for incorporation in Yosemite National Park which had been established in the surrounding country by Congress in 1890. Yosemite National Park was first administered by the U. S. Army but with the establishment of the National Park Service as a bureau of the

U. S. Department of the Interior in 1916, administration passed to civilian hands. Today the visitors' contacts with this Service are largely through uniformed park rangers and naturalists, whose duties are to protect, preserve and interpret the park under the supervision of the park superintendent.

The story of the formation of Yosemite Valley goes back some two hundred million years when this land was beneath the sea. As it subsequently arose out of the sea it was covered with layers of sediments many thousands of feet thick, the remnants of which are seen today as greatly changed rocks in the foothills and on some of the park's highest peaks. The granites which now make up most of Yosemite National Park's rocks welled up underneath this old sea deposit as molten rock which cooled slowly as the sea deposits eroded away. As the Sierra tilted westward through three stages of uplift, rivers established courses down this slope wearing successively deeper valleys into the granite. About one million years ago the third and last deep and steep-sided "V"-shaped river valley was invaded at separate times by three ice age glaciers which carved the valley into its present "U"-shaped form. The first two glaciers were 3000 to 4000 feet deep and extended as far as El Portal. The third and last glacier, filling only about a third of the depth of the valley, dropped its load of rocks and debris at a point between El Capitan and Bridalveil Fall. This made a dam which backed up the water from the melting ice to form Ancient Lake Yosemite, 5½ miles long and perhaps as much as two thousand feet deep in the area of Camp Curry. As the lake filled with sediment the present level floor of the valley came into being.

The first tourist party came to Yosemite Valley in 1855 on horseback over old Indian trails. It was not until 1874

that a toll road, the Coulterville Road, was built, allowing stage travel to the valley floor. It was followed within a month by a competing toll road, the old Big Oak Flat Road. In the autumn of 1874 Washburn, Chapman, Coffman and Company received permission to extend their toll road from Wawona to the valley, thus completing the road from Mariposa, the first from the south. In 1877 Coffman sold his interests and the company became the Yosemite Stage and Turnpike Company, the first organized stageline in Yosemite. During the 1880's the Nevada Stage Company ran stages from Stockton to Yosemite Valley via Milton and the old Big Oak Flat Road. Scheduled stage runs over this route ended in 1888, although there was irregular stage coach travel over this road past the turn of the century.

The days of the stage coach were numbered with the building of the Yosemite Valley Railroad in 1907 from Merced to El Portal. Upon its completion the railroad company built a wagon road from the railhead to the Coulterville Road in Yosemite Valley so that horse-drawn stages could carry train passengers into the park. This was when El Portal—the portal—received its name.

In 1913 stage companies operating in and to the park established the then famous Horseshoe Route running from Raymond to Yosemite Valley and return to Merced. Another well-known stage circuit was the Triangle Route, operated from El Portal past Big Meadows to the Tuolumne Grove of Big Trees and then

via the old Big Oak Flat Road to Yosemite Valley. These several stage routes came to an end with the consolidation and reorganization of transportation and hotel accommodations in the park in 1925 under a corporation that is known today as the Yosemite Park and Curry Company. The transportation division of this company operates bus stages throughout the park and between the park, Merced, Fresno and Lake Tahoe under franchises with the U. S. Department of the Interior, the California Public Utilities Commission and the Interstate Commerce Commission. This division still uses the old name, Yosemite Transportation System, formerly identified with the transportation department of the old Desmond Company.

The building of the Merced All-Year Highway in 1926, the growth of mass automobile travel and the subsequent loss of passenger and freight revenue, led the Yosemite Valley Railroad to abandonment in 1945. In the travel year of 1955 almost a million visitors like yourselves came to the park, mostly by private automobile. For you there are some 217 miles of public roads to various parts of the park and about 750 miles of trails to permit you to enjoy the wilderness features of Yosemite. It is with your pleasure in mind that this self-guiding auto tour booklet has been prepared, that you may have greater opportunity to appreciate, enjoy, and protect the unique scenic wilderness values of Yosemite National Park.

Early Touring in Yosemite Valley



## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This booklet describes the more important points along the highways in Yosemite National Park and along the roads between Merced, Fresno and the park.

To get the greatest enjoyment from this self-guided trip, travel leisurely—drive slowly and carefully.

In the left hand margin of the text is a series of letters and numbers which correspond to post markers with white letters and numbers identifying points of interest along the highway. The letters represent the particular roads as follows: "V" stands for Yosemite Valley. "W" the Wawona Road to the South Entrance, "B" the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias, "G" the Glacier Point Road from Chinquapin, "C" the Crane Flat Road to the park boundary at Carl Inn (Highway 120), and "T" the Tioga Road from Crane Flat to Tioga Pass which leads to the other side of the crest of the Sierra Nevada. Look at "Contents" for the proper page. The mileage shown in parentheses between paragraphs gives the distance between successive points driving either way. Using either or both systems will enable you to follow this guide successfully. Where your travel reverses the order given in the guide, remember that this will also reverse directions as given, i.e., right becomes left, ahead becomes behind, opposite side becomes near side, etc.

The guides to interesting points along the Merced Road and the Fresno Road are on pages 103 and 108, respectively. Along these roads outside the park you will be guided only by the distances given between points. A brief description of the wildlife and plants in the park is given on page 110.

STOP ONLY AT PARKING AREAS OR OFF THE ROAD

AN AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT WILL SPOIL YOUR TRIP

## YOSEMITE VALLEY FROM PARK BOUNDARY ON MERCED ROAD

(Total driving distance 30 miles)

*Keep to the left at all major intersections in the valley.**Map of Yosemite Valley pages 86 and 87.*

**V 1 PARK BOUNDARY.** Yosemite National Park, like our other national parks, was established to preserve an area in as primitive a wilderness condition as possible for the enjoyment by the people for all time. Yosemite is famous for its glacier-sculptured scenery. In contrast to the practices in national forests, no lumbering, hunting or mining is allowed in national parks. Yosemite is a wildlife preserve where wild animals may be seen roaming at large. Yosemite's modern history began in the days of the '49ers, although Indians lived here previously. The walls of the Merced Canyon here, like the walls of Yosemite Valley, are granite. This granite was originally molten rock which was forced up beneath older rocks now worn away.

(For a guide to points of interest along the road between Yosemite National Park and Merced, see page 103.)



Sierra Black Bear

**V 2 ARCH ROCK ENTRANCE STATION.** There are 4 entrance stations in Yosemite where park rangers furnish information and collect visitor-use fees. This money is not used for operating the park but is deposited directly in the U. S. Treasury. Additional detailed information is available at park headquarters and the Yosemite Museum.

**V 3 OLD COULTERVILLE ROAD.** On the left the highway is joined by the old Coulterville Road, the first road into Yosemite Valley. (Read description in W-4, page 80.)

**V 4 CASCADE FALLS.** In the spring and early summer you will have from here a fine view of Cascade Falls. The falls have a drop of approximately 500 feet. (Read description under C-3, page 93.)



California Mule Deer

**V JUNCTION WITH THE BIG OAK FLAT ROAD.** The Big Oak Flat

**5** Road which takes off here is described under C-1, page 92. (Drive straight ahead at next intersection)

**V VALLEY VIEW.** From Valley View

**6** you see the "gates" of the valley, formed by El Capitan and Cathedral Rocks. In early summer the scene is framed by fragrant blossoms of azalea, the shrubs which line the river bank. The trees of the forest in the valley are principally two dominant evergreens, the ponderosa pine and the incense-cedar, with a scattering of white fir, Douglas-fir and a few sugar pine. In the meadows grow the California black oak (source of food for the now departed Yosemite Indians), black cottonwood and white alder. The last two trees are common along the streams together with the Pacific dogwood. The rocky slopes at the base of the cliffs are covered with the evergreen live oaks, as well as a scattering of bigleaf maples and California laurel. Although the incense-cedar, because of its red bark, is frequently mistaken for

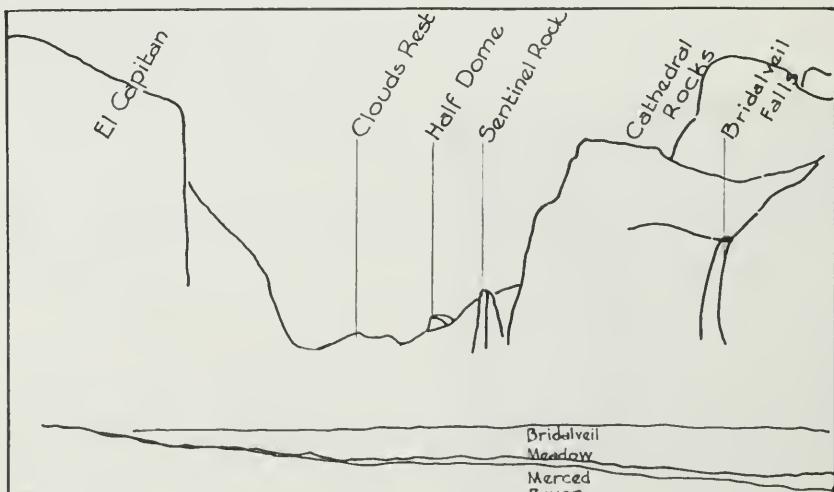
"redwood," no giant sequoias grow native on the floor of the valley. A few young sequoias, notably a tree near the entrance of the Yosemite Museum, have been transplanted. (For further information on trees read "Broadleaved Trees of Yosemite" and "Cone-bearing Trees of Yosemite" available at the museum and gift shops.)

**V EL CAPITAN MORaine AND JUNCTION OF OLD BIG OAK**

**7** FLAT ROAD. The low ridge in the forest extending towards the river is a glacial deposit or "moraine" formed by the most recent ice-age glacier. As the ice melted back this moraine made a dam to help form Ancient Lake Yosemite which was between one and two thousand feet deep at the upper end of the valley and was  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles long. The lake gradually filled in with sediments to form the present level valley floor. The road on the other side of the highway is a section of the Old Big Oak Flat Road, now abandoned.

**V EL CAPITAN.** Read description

**8** under V-32, page 76.



Features seen from Valley View

**V OLD STAGECOACH ROAD.**

**9** You can turn back the pages of time by driving west over this section of the original stagecoach road which skirts the base of El Capitan. This is a one way loop drive from this point on the opposite side of the highway and continuing for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile back to the main highway. Except for an oiled surface this road is little changed from stagecoach days.

**V SENTINEL ROCK, THE THREE BROTHERS, AND EL CAPITAN.**

**10** As you pass El Capitan you will see the Three Brothers on your left. The highest of the rocks, Eagle Peak, is 3,773 feet above the valley floor, it being the highest point on the north rim of the valley. It may be reached on foot by way of the Yosemite Falls Trail. (Read description of Sentinel Rock under V-30, and of El Capitan under V-32, page 76.



Three Brothers

**V ROCKY POINT.** On the down-valley side of the parking area is a rock slide which occurred about 1922. The scar is slowly being covered with vegetation. It tells the story of the geological and biological forces that continue to alter the landscape. Grooved and shiny glacier polish left by Ice Age glaciers can be seen about 25 feet above the base of the cliff close at hand. This is one of the few places where glacier polish can be seen on the floor of the valley.

**V YOSEMITE LODGE.** The Yosemite Lodge area was first developed **12** by the U.S. Army as an Army post when it administered the park prior to 1916. In 1915 it was improved by the Desmond Company which had a 20-year franchise to provide hotel accommodations. During the period between 1920 and 1925 a succession of reorganizations brought the present Yosemite Park and Curry Co. into being. The history of this company is told under G-12, page 90.

Today a new lodge replaces the old one which originally was an Army barracks. New modern cottages are taking the place of the old redwood cabins. A gift shop, grill, post office, swimming pool and cafeteria are located at the Lodge. This unit is open all year and is popular with the winter visitors. The row of dwellings across the road from the Lodge once were Army non-commissioned officers' living quarters.

**V YOSEMITE FALLS.** The spur road

**13** to the left leads to near the base of Yosemite Falls, a distance of 0.2 of a mile. One of the highest free-leaping waterfalls in the world, its total drop is 2,425 feet. The great upper fall is 1,430 feet, the middle cascade 675, and the lower fall 320 feet. The top may be reached by a rather steep but scenic trail which starts from Camp 4, which you passed just before reaching Yosemite Lodge. The falls are full in the spring and dry up in late summer. In winter a large ice cone usually forms



Yosemite Falls

at the base of the upper fall by slabs of ice formed from frozen spray falling off the cliff. The combined height of the falls is nearly twice that of the Empire State Building, at present the world's tallest man-made structure, while the lower fall is twice the height of Niagara.

**V YOSEMITE VILLAGE.** This includes the Park Service Headquarters, **14** Yosemite Museum, post office, Western Union, photographic and curio shops, residences of permanent employees in the park, offices of the Yosemite Park and Curry Company, a garage and service station. Eventually the Village Store, studio and grill, Degnan's restaurant and store, as well as Best's Studio, will make up the merchandising portion of the village.

**V LOST ARROW, INDIAN CANYON, LEHAMITE FALL.** From **15** the plaza near the Yosemite Museum and Park Headquarters you can

see the Lost Arrow high on the cliff to the right of the Yosemite Falls. This slender shaft of granite is separated from the main cliff and rises to a height of several hundred feet. The Lost Arrow was first climbed September 3, 1946, by members of the Sierra Club, an ordeal which took them nearly 5 days and nights. The legend of the Lost Arrow is told in "Yosemite Indians," available at museums and gift shops. Indian Canyon is the deep ravine to the right of the main cliff, so named from its use by the Yosemite Indians as an escape route when they were pursued by the Mariposa Battalion in 1851. During the early spring runoff Lehamite Fall drops into a ravine on the right wall of this canyon. Lehamite is Indian for "Arrow-wood."



Yosemite Museum

**V LEWIS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.**

**16** The Lewis Memorial Hospital has a capacity of 16 beds and is equipped to handle most emergencies. It is operated under government contract and is staffed by competent doctors and nurses. The park dentist has an office in this building. The hospital was named in honor of W. B. Lewis, an early civilian superintendent of Yosemite National Park. The houses across the road from the hospital are residences of employees of the Yosemite Park and Curry Co. This area is called Tecoya, from the Indian word To-co-ya, "The Basket," said to be associated with an Indian legend about North Dome.

**V CHURCH BOWL AND GLACIER POINT VIEW.**

**17** In a natural amphitheater at the base of the cliff is the Church Bowl where religious gatherings are held during the summer. Across the meadow Glacier Point rises 3215 feet above the valley floor. From here is one of the best views of the firefall. (For a description of the firefall read G-12, page 90.)

**V THE AHWAHNEE.**

**18** The Ahwahnee was opened in 1927. It has 115 rooms and cottages decorated in an Indian motif. Rooms of special note are the dining room with its lofty massive construction and tall windows which frame the scenic views; the great lounge, a room of cathedral-like proportions, and the El Dorado Diggins, a cocktail lounge reminiscent of a street in an early California mining town. Ahwahnee is a native Indian word meaning "deep grassy valley"—the Yosemite Valley.

**V HALF DOME.**

**19** Dominating the upper end of the valley is Half Dome, hallmark of Yosemite National Park. It marks the junction of



Half Dome

Tenaya Creek (left) and the Merced River (right). Rising nearly one mile above the valley floor it is one of the most majestic rock forms known. On clear days it can be seen from places along Highway 99 in the San Joaquin Valley. Half Dome was climbed for the first time in October 1875 by George G. Anderson. Today hikers reach its 13-acre top in summer by a trail up the far (east) side with the aid of cables. The likeness of a great face on the 2000-foot high sheer surface gives rise to an interesting Indian legend, told in "Yosemite Indians."

(Take left-hand turn at intersection.)

**V SUGAR PINE.**

**20** The largest of the few sugar pines on the valley floor is the tree growing to the left of the far end of the Sugar Pine Bridge. So highly regarded was this tree that in 1884 James M. Hutchings, then guardian of the Yosemite Grant, built the first

stone work seen along the river to protect the bank from erosion and saves the tree. Sugar pines are normally found at a higher elevation. Their cones have been known to grow up to 26" in length.

**V INDIAN CAVES.** Indian Caves **21** are the site of an old Indian camp known as either HOL-LOW or LAH-KOO-HAH. See if you can find the flat rock near the caves where Indian women pounded acorns from the black oak, their principal food. The caves were used for temporary shelter during severe weather, for refuge from enemies, and for storage. The Indians of Yosemite normally dwelt in wigwam-like structures of incense cedar bark called "uma-chas," described more fully in "Indians of Yosemite."

**V MIRROR LAKE.** is at its best in **22** spring and early summer when the absence of wind during early morn-

ing hours makes perfect reflections possible on its surface. This lake was formed by rock slides from the cliff walls which dammed Tenaya Creek some years ago. Filling in rapidly (as did ancient Lake Yosemite which formed the valley floor), Mirror Lake will probably disappear within a decade or so. Even now it all but dries up every autumn. Tenaya Creek, which feeds this lake, starts above Tenaya Lake near Tuolumne Meadows, and cascades from that lake into the upper part of the Tenaya box canyon. Annual Easter Sunrise services are held on the shore of Mirror Lake.

**CLOUD'S REST** is the steep-sided mountain just beyond towering Half Dome.

**MT. WATKINS** across the canyon from Cloud's Rest is the peak which is reflected in Mirror Lake. The peak is 4,235 feet high and is named for Carleton E. Watkins, a pioneer Yosemite photographer.



Mirror Lake in spring



Royal Arches, North Dome and Washington Column

**BASKET DOME**, farther to the left, is 3,500 feet. Its name came from an Indian legend.

(Take left-hand turns at next two intersections.)

be seen at their best here during early spring. This is also an important starting point for many High Sierra trails, including those to Vernal Fall, Nevada Fall, Little Yosemite, Half Dome, and the high Sierra camps.

**V GLACIAL MORAINE.** The low hill at this intersection is one of **23** the few morainal ridges still existing on the valley floor. It was formed when two glaciers came together. This is known locally as "Ski Hill" because here began Yosemite's skiing.

**V HAPPY ISLES.** The spur road **24** leaves the highway junction and leads up to the Happy Isles and Nature Center. The Merced River at this point branches into several channels forming two main islands. Some 15 species of trees — practically every kind found on the valley floor — grow at Happy Isles. The great white blossoms of the Pacific flowering dogwood may

**HAPPY ISLES NATURE CENTER —** To help you see and enjoy Yosemite this visitor and information center supplements the museum in Yosemite Village and serves as the "key" to your trips into the back country. For 30 years the building was operated as a hatchery by the California Department of Fish and Game, raising fingerling trout for Yosemite's lakes and streams. Starting in 1957 the trout were supplied from new hatcheries near Fresno and Sonora. An outdoor pond displays large trout. Exhibits in the building will be of interest to the entire family. As you leave Happy Isles, traveling down-valley, Camp 11 is on your right. This is one of six free public campgrounds in Yosemite Valley main-



Scene in Old Village c. 1903

tained by the National Park Service for visitors who have their own camping equipment.

**V CAMP 14.** Continuing westward you see Camp 14 on your right. Beyond and across the Merced River are Camps 15 and 7. In the summer months interesting outdoor campfire programs are given by National Park Service ranger-naturalists nightly at Camps 7 and 14, (except Sunday when evening church services are conducted). Before approaching the Camp Curry intersection you will see an apple orchard on your left. It was planted in the 1860's by James Lamon (pronounced le-mon), one of the first homesteaders in the valley. This relic of pioneer days is now used as a parking area for Camp Curry. In winter part of the parking area is flooded and frozen over for a skating rink.

**V CAMP CURRY.** Camp Curry, one of the most popular valley accommodations, was founded by Mr. and Mrs. David Curry in 1899. A grocery

store, gift shop, cafeteria, dining room, swimming pool, bicycle rental stand, dance pavilion, garage and service station, and sleeping accommodations are located here. Camp Curry is open from approximately May 15 to September 15.

**GLACIER POINT.** Directly above Camp Curry is the Overhanging Rock at Glacier Point, 3,254 feet up from the valley floor. There are three trails to Glacier Point, 1½ miles, 5 miles and 11 miles in length. By road it is 32 miles. In the spring Staircase Falls can be seen cascading from one ledge to another on the cliff above.

Across the valley the great granite arcs are the exposed edges of rock shells known as the ROYAL ARCHES. Streaking down over the Royal Arches to the left are ROYAL ARCHES CASCADES, a striking 1000-foot springtime waterfall. Above the Royal Arches is NORTH DOME, 3,571 feet high. To the right of the arches WASHINGTON COLUMN rises like a tall skyscraper 1,912 feet above the valley. Less spectacular than some other rock forms, the Washington Column is still nearly four times as high as the Washington Monument.

### V LE CONTE MEMORIAL LODGE

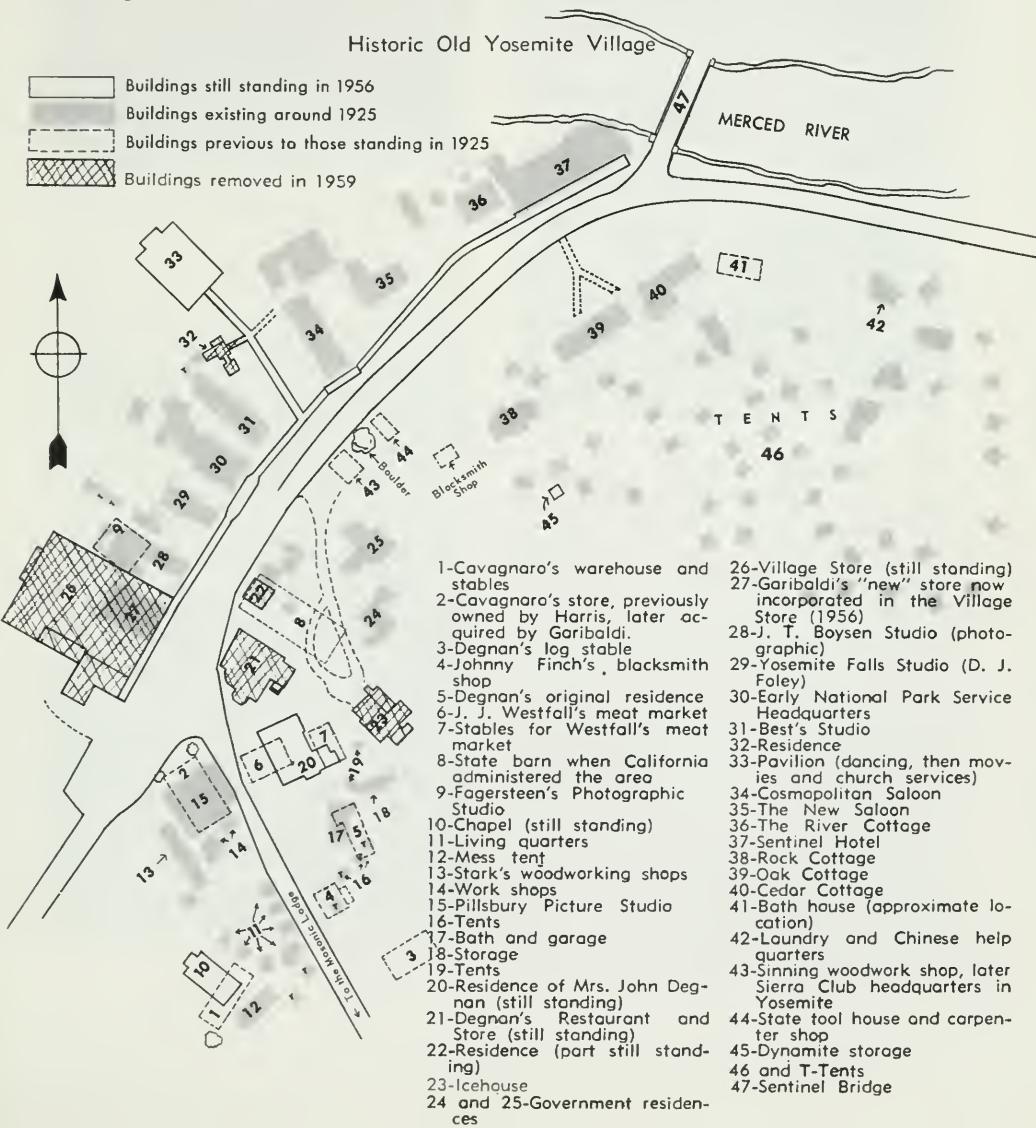
27 Down-valley from Camp Curry, directly across the road from the Housekeeping Camp, is the LeConte Memorial Lodge built in 1903 by the Sierra Club, first at Camp Curry, but later moved to its present site. The memorial commemorates the work of Joseph LeConte, a famed geologist. Here the Sierra Club maintains a mountaineering and conservation library and exhibits and furnishes information about rock climbing.

### V OLD VILLAGE.

The Old Village started in the late 1850's and was the center of activity prior to 1916. It boasted such enterprises as photographic studios, general store, post office, church, park headquarters, residences, hotels and saloons. At the present time (1959) the Old Village has a church and movie pavilion. It is planned to remove all man-made structures eventually and return the area to its natural state. Historical markers will then show former building sites.

Historic Old Yosemite Village

- Buildings still standing in 1956
- Buildings existing around 1925
- Buildings previous to those standing in 1925
- Buildings removed in 1959



**V YOSEMITE CHAPEL** — Except for the Mountain House at Glacier Point, built one year earlier, the chapel is the oldest structure in use in Yosemite National Park. It was built in 1879 from funds collected from Sunday school children all over the country. Erected originally near the foot of the Four Mile Trail, the chapel was later moved to its present site. This chapel is unique in that it serves all faiths.

**V VIEW OF YOSEMITE FALLS.** Along the edge of the meadow down-valley from the Old Village you will have one of the finest distant views of Yosemite Falls. Detailed description under V-13, page 69.

**SENTINEL ROCK** — From here Sentinel Rock can be seen to your left and slightly down-valley rising some 3,000 feet above the valley floor. It was named from its fancied likeness to a gigantic watchtower. Although Sentinel Rock has been climbed many times by various routes, it was not until 1949 that the face was scaled in afeat of skill and endurance which took 5 days.

**V FOUR-MILE TRAIL.** Beginning at the far end of this parking area and at the base of Sentinel Rock is the Four-Mile Trail, the most popular trail to and from Glacier Point. It presents fine scenic views especially at Union Point. The original trail, completed in 1872, was the first to the valley rim and, as the name implies, was about four miles long. Later rebuilding has lengthened it to about five miles. The first tourist accommodations were built at the foot of the Four-Mile Trail, of which the Lower Hotel erected in 1856 was the earliest. In 1869 "Black's" was constructed on the site of the Lower Hotel and "Leidig's" was built nearby. Here, too, the chapel was built in 1879. All that remains today are the locust



Sentinel Rock and Sentinel Falls in Spring  
trees planted at the site of the old well.

**SENTINEL FALLS** is on the right as you face Sentinel Rock. Prominent only in the early spring and summer, they start in the highest hanging valley in the vicinity. The water cascades down the face of the cliff some 2,000 feet in a series of spectacular leaps and drops.

**V VIEW OF EL CAPITAN.** El Capitan is one of the largest exposed monoliths of granite in the world. The sheer cliff is about 3,000 feet high and the summit of the rock is 3,564 feet above the valley floor. Look for the dark mass on the face of the cliff which suggests the map of North America. An 80-foot pine tree many hundred years old is rooted in cracks on the face of El Capitan and can be located by following the "map" downward through Central America to an overhanging ledge. El Capitan was named for its imposing position and dominating size among the valley cliffs.

**V** **VIEW OF THE THREE BROTHERS.** Read full description under **33** V-10, page 69.

**V** **CATHEDRAL SPIRES.** Named for an obvious likeness, these two **34** giant shafts of granite are far larger than any real cathedral spires. The right hand spire is some 2,100 feet, the other about 1,900 feet above the valley floor. Both spires have been climbed by expert rock climbers but the ascent is very difficult. Cathedral Spires were named by James M. Hutchings in September 1862.

**V** **MERCED RIVER.** There are fine **35** views of the Merced River as you drive between Cathedral Spires and Bridalveil Fall. Starting among the snowfields in the High Sierra, the Merced River drops 11,000 feet in its run to the sea. The name Merced has been

shortened from its original — El Rio de Nuestra Senora de la Merced — River of Our Lady of Mercy. It was named by Gabriel Moraga in September 1806 during his expedition in the San Joaquin Valley because of its refreshing water after seeing only muddy streams during his journey.



Bridalveil Fall



El Capitan

**BRIDALVEIL MORaine** — As you approach the widened part of the highway in front of Bridalveil Fall, the road cut through a bank on your left reveals a section of Bridalveil Moraine, a pile of coarse and fine-ground rock left by Yosemite Valley glaciers.

**V** **BRIDALVEIL FALL.** Bridalveil Fall, a drop of 620 feet, runs all **36** year diminishing in late summer. In the afternoon rainbows in the spray may be seen from the base of the fall and from the parking area at the east entrance of the Wawona Tunnel. The Indians called the fall Pohono which means "puffing wind." It is this same

wind which creates the spray that caused the white man to name the fall Bridalveil. For closer views of the fall, enter the parking area ahead and follow the footpath to the base.

**LEANING TOWER** — To the right of Bridalveil Fall is a towering pinnacle of granite rising about 1800 feet above the valley which, from this angle, appears to be leaning outward from the cliff below.

**RIBBON FALL** — Across the valley and to the left of El Capitan is Ribbon Fall, 1612 feet high. It flows only in spring and is the highest single drop in Yosemite though not leaping free of the cliff surface.

**ORIGINAL WAWONA ROAD.**  
**37** The old road leaving the highway uphill from the left, with a chain across it is part of the old Wawona Road and is used today as a fire road.  
 (Read description under W-10,  
 page 81.)

**V TUNNEL VIEW.** From the parking area at the east end of the Wawona Tunnel is the most picturesque and most photographed general view of Yosemite Valley. This point is confused frequently with the historical Inspiration Point which is on the old Wawona Road some 900 feet above you. Evidences of the geological forces which formed the valley — stream erosion and glacial ice — can be seen from this point: the sheer glacial-plucked cliffs, the stream-cut valley of Bridalveil Creek left hanging by glacial action, and the flat floor of the valley. William Abrams in 1849 was probably the first white man to see Yosemite Valley. In 1851 the Mariposa Battalion, while chasing the Yosemite Indians along the cliffs above you, entered the valley and became the first "effective" discoverers. The barely discernible line part way up and crossing the broken rock slope on the other side of the valley is a part of the Old Big Oak Flat Road described under C-1, page 92.



Yosemite Valley from Wawona Tunnel Overlook

**V CROSSING THE VALLEY ON THE POHONO ROAD.** As you **39** start across the valley from the intersection near Bridalveil Fall parking area you will pass through a small grove of trees. On the right side of the road in this little grove is a marker on the site where two prospectors were reported killed by Indians on May 2, 1852. Indians found later wearing the prospectors' clothing were executed by soldiers.

**V PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND JOHN MUIR 40 CAMP SITE.** "On this site President Theodore Roosevelt sat beside a campfire with John Muir on May 17,

1903 and talked 'forest good.' Muir urged the President to work for preservation of the priceless remnants of America's wilderness. At this spot one of our country's foremost conservationists received great inspiration." In this meadow the Mariposa Battalion also had camped at the time of their entrance into Yosemite Valley on March 27, 1851. It was then that Dr. Lafayette H. Bunnell, surgeon of the battalion, proposed the name *Yosemite*, a corruption of "O-ham'i-te" or "Oo-soo'-ma-te," (Indian for 'grizzly bear.'), a term he picked up from the Indian guide. Bunnell did not know that this name applied to only those Indians in the valley who lived north of the river and that all the Indians referred to themselves as Ahwahneches, people of Ahwahnee, the deep grassy valley.

### YOSEMITE VALLEY TO WAWONA AND SOUTH ENTRANCE

(Total driving distance 25.4 miles)

**W WAWONA TUNNEL.** The Wawona Tunnel, blasted out of granite **1** in 1933 to avoid a roadcut which would deface the landscape, is four-fifths of a mile long 28 feet wide and 19 feet high. There is a maximum of 550 feet of rock above the tunnel and a maximum of 503 feet to the edge of the cliff. The tunnel was drilled entirely from the east side under government contract; it took almost 2 years to complete and cost \$847,500. One of the amazing facts is that not a single person was killed or seriously injured in the construction of this tunnel. Automatic fans in the tunnel exhaust carbon monoxide. When 1 part gas to 20,000 parts of air is registered, the controls turn the fans on low and as the ratio of carbon monoxide increases they gradually increase the speed. At full speed impure air is exhausted at a rate of 300,000 cubic feet per minute. Grade in the tunnel is 5%, approaching 6% at the west end.

**W EXFOLIATION.** As the road here **2** passes under Turtleback Dome, it is cut through solid granite exposing layers or "shells" of rock. These are caused by an expansion process called exfoliation, the same which has caused the curved, smooth surfaces of domes such as North Dome and Half Dome, and the Royal Arches. The black splotches in the rock are concentrations of diorite, a type of granite in which the dark materials (black mica and hornblende) predominate. The white streaks running through the rock are quartz and felspar, the two light-colored minerals found in granite.

**W VIEW OF CASCADE FALLS.** **3** Just beyond the west end of the tunnel you can see Cascade Falls on your right and on the opposite side of the valley. They drop about 500 feet.



Exfoliating granite of Turtleback Dome west of Wawona Tunnel

**W COULTERVILLE ROAD.** The descending scar along the wooded slope opposite is the old Coulterville Road, first wagon road into Yosemite Valley. This toll road, built with private capital, reached the valley floor June 17, 1874, one month before its competitor the old Big Oak Flat Road. The latter is located along the wooded heights somewhat above the present Big Oak Flat Road. The Coulterville Road is narrow with an 18% grade in the last 1000 feet as compared to a 6% maximum on modern mountain roads. It still receives limited use today.

**W RAVAGES OF FOREST FIRES.** Across the canyon you can see the results of forest fires. One fire, which occurred in 1941, was started when electrical transmission wires were blown down on dry underbrush. The area is now being reseeded through the action of the prevailing winds blowing from the southwest. A five-year study has shown remarkable recovery of growth without the help of man. At a greater distance and across the canyon you can see dead trees from a September 1953 fire when a series of dry lightning storms started different fires.

**MERCED ROAD** — Paralleling the Merced River below is the Merced Road, called the "All-Year Highway," leading

to the town of Merced in the San Joaquin Valley some 80 miles distant.

**TREE ZONES** — Between the tunnel and Chinquapin you pass through zones where the ponderosa pine and oak trees give way to the sugar pine, Jeffrey pine and lodgepole pine. Of special interest is the sugar pine, a tall shaft frequently clear for a hundred feet or more, its arms flung wide. At certain seasons long cones hang from the end of its branches. The Pacific dogwood adds beauty to this forest drive, especially in spring when it is white with blossoms and in autumn when the foliage turns red or pink. (More can be learned about trees in "Cone-bearing Trees of Yosemite" and "Broadleaved Trees of Yosemite," available at museums and gift shops.)

**W CHINQUAPIN.** Chinquapin, 6,039 feet in elevation, receives its name from a flowering shrub common in the area. This shrub grows in the Sierra at an elevation from 3,000 to 8,000 feet. It is from 1 to 8 feet tall and has a smooth brown bark with a yellow underside on the leaves. Related to the now almost extinct American chestnut, it bears burr-like fruit which may sometimes be seen. Chinquapin, the place, has been an important road and trail junction since the 1850's. Across the highway from the service station is the District Ranger's headquarters.

**W HENNESS RIDGE.** A fire lookout operates on a point on this ridge during the fire danger period. Visitors are welcome.

**LOGGING RAILROAD** — About a half-mile along the Henness Ridge road are the remains of an old railroad bed constructed and used by the Yosemite Lumber Company between 1912 and 1924 before private lands within the park were acquired. Running from El Portal up to an area called Empire

Meadows, the winding road bed spanned a distance of some 25 miles. It is now fairly well covered with undergrowth, but most of it can be traveled on foot.

**W** **V**IEW OF SOUTH FORK CANYON. The canyon below is that of the South Fork of the Merced River which joins the Main Merced River about 12 miles down stream. This highway crosses the South Fork at Wawona. Signal Peak is the point to the right at which the level ridge of the mountain across the canyon drops off.

**W** **W**AWONA CAMPGROUND.

**9** Originally known as Camp A. E. Wood, after the first superintendent of Yosemite National Park, this campground has been extended downstream some distance and is now one of the most modern campgrounds in the park. It is distinguished by individual campsites

screened from one another by natural forest growth. (Read details in W-11, page 82.)

**W** **T**HE **W**AWONA **R**OAD. Up stream is the only covered bridge in the entire National Park System and is now preserved as an historical structure. Across it ran the original Wawona Road into Yosemite Valley. Interest in building this first road into the valley from the south became active in Mariposa in 1874. The road crossed the Chowchilla Mountain to the west and followed the road which is seen emerging from the forest on the far side of the golf course. The original Wawona Road came in from the south as far as Alder Creek. In the early 1870's a desire to have a road into Yosemite Valley was expressed by the Guardian of the Yosemite Grant. A contract was given to a company of Chinese to complete a road from Alder



Covered bridge over South Fork of Merced River at Wawona



General view of Wawona and Wawona Hotel

Creek to Yosemite Valley for a sum of \$10,000. The work was started December 4, 1874, with 50 men and at times the crew numbered 300. By April 18, 1875 a road had been completed to near the present Camp Curry. (Read also V-37, page 78.)

**W WAWONA.** Wawona, which in 11 the Indian tongue meant "big tree," was first a camp on the Mann Brothers trail through the high Sierra. Later Galen Clark, Yosemite Grant's first guardian, acquired the Wawona area, built a cabin and it became known as Clark's Ranch. Clark enlarged the building to accommodate travelers and it became an important stopping place for early Yosemite visitors. In 1890 a law was enacted setting aside a part of the Wawona area as reserved forest lands. Capt. A. E. Wood became the first superintendent of the area in 1891. With detachments from the

Fourth Cavalry he made a determined effort for many years to keep sheep and cattle grazers and poachers out of the park.

In 1875 the Washburn Brothers purchased the Clark ranch and over a period of years built most of the buildings known as the Wawona Hotel. Following purchase by the U. S. Government in 1932, the Yosemite Park and Curry Co. assumed, under contract, management of the hotel at Wawona.

**W SOUTH ENTRANCE.** Here at the 12 southern gateway to the park, formerly known as "Four Mile," is one of the four entrance stations where control of travel in and out of Yosemite is maintained by National Park Service rangers. A short distance from this station is the south boundary of Yosemite National Park which adjoins Sierra Na-

tional Forest. National forests and national parks differ in that national forests, under the U. S. Department of Agriculture, manage forests for such economic and recreational uses as lumbering, grazing, hunting and resorts, while national parks, under the U. S. Depart-

ment of the Interior, are responsible for preserving their lands as primitive wilderness areas and game sanctuaries for the enjoyment of all people for all time. (For a guide to points of interest along the road between Yosemite National Park and Fresno, see page 108.)

### MARIPOSA GROVE OF GIANT SEQUOIAS

(Total driving distance 4.5 miles)

**B GIANT SEQUOIAS.** The giant sequoias (*Sequoia gigantea*), popularly known as "Big Trees," are probably the largest and oldest living things in the world. Although they are related to the coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), there is a striking difference in general appearance and foliage. The giant sequoias are more massive, while the coast redwoods are taller. The bark of the giant sequoias is a golden brown while that of its relative is darker. The burls of redwood souvenirs seen in gift shops are from the coast redwood; burls do not grow on giant sequoias. Flowering of giant sequoias takes place from February to April, the pollen being carried by the wind. In contrast to the great size of these trees, their cones are only  $1\frac{3}{4}$ " to  $2\frac{3}{4}$ " in length. Both male and female cones grow on the same tree. After maturing for two years on the tree, the female cone may drop from 150 to 300 seeds. Cones, however, may remain unopened on the trees for as long as 20 years. Usual methods of determining age of trees with boring instruments are not possible in the giant sequoias because of their great size. Accurate age dating in sequoias may be done only by counting the annual rings in fallen trees. Some sequoias have been estimated to be as much as 4000 years old. The wood contains no resin ducts but has a high percentage of tannin. This chemical gives the red appearance to the bark and heartwood and turns black



Grizzly Giant

on exposed ends of fallen trees, giving them the appearance of being burned. Tannin resists insect and fungus attack, the great enemies of many other trees and thus aid longevity of the sequoias. Since sequoia wood is very brittle, light, and weak, with up to 80% waste for large trees when felled, it has little value as lumber although on occasion it has received some limited use as grape stakes. (For more information we recommend "A Guide to the Yosemite

Sequoias," available at museums and gift shops.)

**B MARIPOSA GROVE.** The giant sequoia is native only on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada, and occurs in scattered groves for a distance of 250 miles, mostly at elevations of 5000 to 8400 feet. Of the three groves in Yosemite the Mariposa Grove is the largest and best known. It was probably discovered in 1849 by Major Burney, the first Mariposa County sheriff, and John McCauley. Measurements were taken and reported in the town of Mariposa but they were considered just another "tall" story of those pioneer days. In 1857 this grove was thoroughly explored and brought to public attention by Galen Clark, one of the first visitors to the region. He named it after the County of Mariposa in which it is located. In 1864 President Lincoln signed an act setting aside the Mariposa Grove and Yosemite Valley as the Yosemite Grant, the first State Park of the nation. It was administered by the State of California with Galen Clark as first guardian. The grove is about four

square miles in area and includes about 200 mature trees.

Ahead you will see a sign pointing to the GRIZZLY GIANT, named by James M. Hutchings in 1859, the fifth largest giant sequoia known and the largest in Yosemite. It may be the oldest of all giant sequoias, estimated age 3800 years. The blackened places on the giant sequoias are burns from forest fires of the last few centuries. These trees are amazingly resistant to fire, insects and fungus attack and usually die only when roots are disturbed and they fall.

**B YOUNG SEQUOIAS.** Although millions of seeds, each less than  $1/672$ th of an ounce when dry, may be dropped by a single mature tree, only about 15% ever germinate and only then when the seeds can reach mineral soil. In spite of this low viability our giant sequoia groves are not dying off. In addition to this cluster numerous young sequoias have sprung up in front of the Big Trees Lodge where the soil was disturbed in the building of the parking area.



Mariposa Grove Museum and Giant Sequoias

**B** MARIPOSA GROVE MUSEUM.

**4** This museum, devoted exclusively to the story of the sequoias, marks the site of the original cabin built by Galen Clark in 1857, shortly after he first visited the grove. The original cabin was destroyed about 30 years later. In 1885 the State Board of Commissioners in charge of the Yosemite Grant built a second one on the same site, enlarging it in 1902. In 1930 the present cabin, a replica of the former structure, was constructed as a museum. The tallest sequoia in the Mariposa Grove, the 286-foot-high Columbia Tree, can be seen across the meadow from the museum. Its height is almost equal to the length of a football field. This museum is open during summer only.

**B** THE WAWONA (Tunnel) TREE.

**5** Probably the most photographed and certainly one of the most famous trees in the world, the picture of this "tunnel" tree has appeared in geography texts the world over. In 1881 the Yosemite Stage and Turnpike Company hired the Scribner Brothers for \$75 to enlarge an old burn to the present size of 8 feet wide, 26 feet long, and 10 feet

high. The tree is 234 feet high, 19.8 feet in diameter at 10 feet above mean base. The name comes from the Miwok Indian word, "Wah-wo-nah," meaning "big tree." There are two other tunnel trees in Yosemite; the California Tree within a few hundred yards of the Grizzly Giant and the "dead tunnel tree" on a loop just off the road through the Tuolumne Grove. The Wawona tunnel tree may now be dying from the tramping of millions of human feet on its delicate roots and the former depredation of man in cutting the tunnel.

**B** WAWONA POINT.

The spur road leads a short distance to Wawona Point. From this point you will have a fine view of the canyon of the South Fork of the Merced River, the meadow and golf course in front of the Wawona Hotel. To the eastward, near the headwaters of the south fork, you can usually see Gale Peak, 10,693 feet in elevation, beyond which lies the drainage system of the upper San Joaquin River. To the west (left) beyond the descending hills is the lower San Joaquin Valley, part of the great Central Valley of California. This is a choice spot from which to see colorful sunsets.

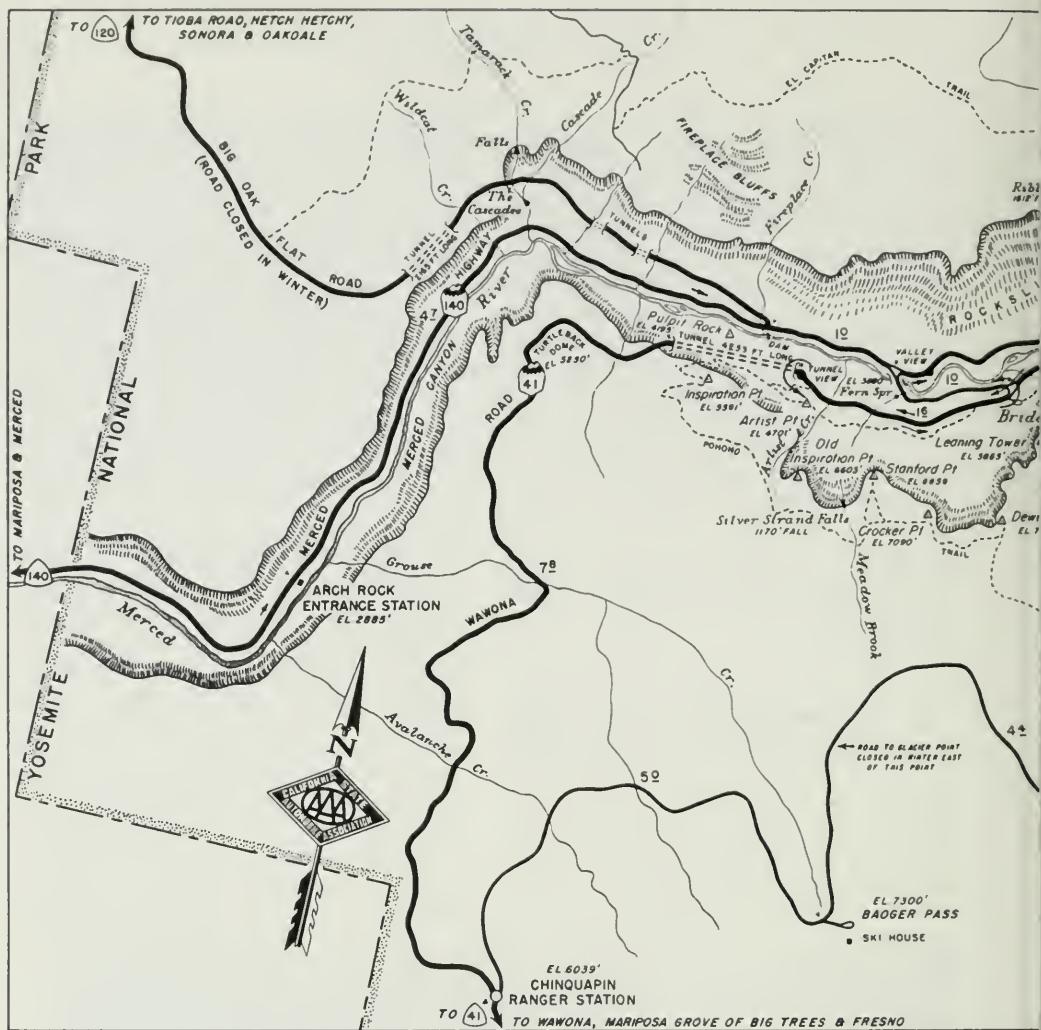
## CHINQUAPIN TO GLACIER POINT

(Total driving distance 18 miles)

**G** GLACIER POINT ROAD. The **0** original road to Glacier Point, built in 1882, was acquired by the Federal Government in 1917 along with the old Wawona Road, at which time tolls were abolished. The present road was completed in 1936 and follows the original road bed in many places.

**G** MERCED CANYON VIEW. Below is seen the gorge of the Merced River winding through the foot-

ills with the Merced Road paralleling it. Near where these disappear beyond a bend are buildings of El Portal just outside the west boundary of Yosemite National Park. On a clear day you can see the San Joaquin Valley where the town of Merced is located and on the other side of the valley the Coast Range, about 125 miles distant. The Wawona Road passes directly beneath you at this viewpoint. In front of you is a sugar pine with its typical ungainly branching form.

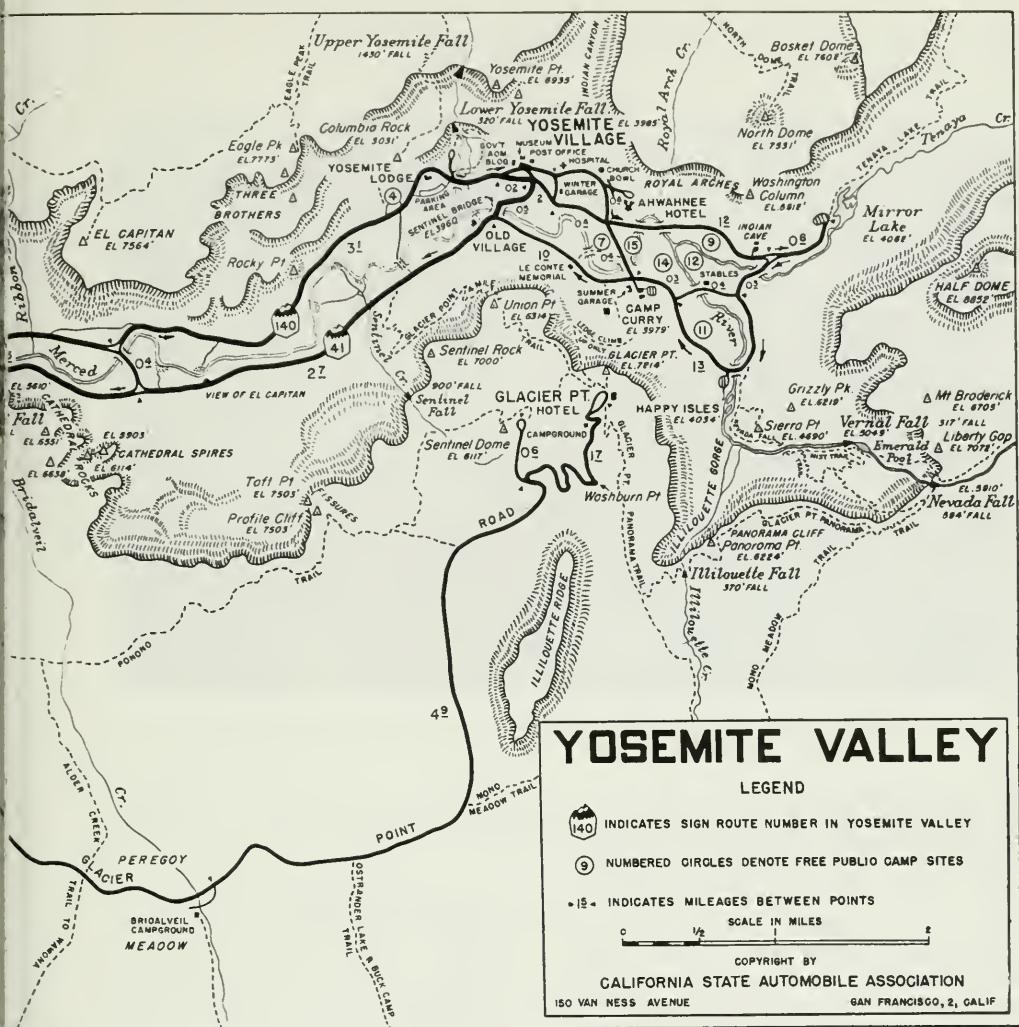


## HIGHWAY DISTANCES FROM YOS

### Yosemite Valley Area (see above map)

Ahwahnee Hotel	.8 mi.	Housekeeping Camp	1.0 mi.
Bridalveil Fall	4.5 mi.	El Capitan Bridge	3.5 mi.
Camp Curry	1.4 mi.	Happy Isles	2.5 mi.
Camp 4 (public campground)	.8 mi.	Mirror Lake	2.5 mi.
Camp 7 (public campground)	1.0 mi.	Old Village (store, etc.)	.7 mi.
Camp 9 (organization camp)	1.5 mi.	Pohono Bridge	5.6 mi.
Camp 11 (public campground)	1.8 mi.	Curry Company stables	1.9 mi.
Camp 12 (public campground)	1.9 mi.	Wawona Tunnel (east portal)	6.0 mi.
Camp 14 (public campground)	1.8 mi.	Yosemite Falls parking area	.7 mi.
Camp 15 (public campground)	1.0 mi.	Yosemite Lodge	.6 mi.

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## WHITE MUSEUM, YOSEMITE VALLEY

### Points Outside Yosemite Valley Area

Arch Rock Ranger Station	11.0 mi.	Mono Lake	76.0 mi.
Badger Pass (winter ski area)	20.0 mi.	Reno (via Tioga Road)	218.0 mi.
Fresno (via Wawona Road)	94.0 mi.	(via All-Year Highway and Sacramento)	334.0 mi.
Glacier Point	30.0 mi.	San Francisco (via All-Year Highway)	211.0 mi.
Hetch Hetchy (via B.O. Flat Rd.)	38.0 mi.	(via Big Oak Flat Road)	195.0 mi.
Los Angeles (via Wawona Road)	313.0 mi.	South Entrance Ranger Station	31.0 mi.
(via All-Year Highway)	356.0 mi.	Tioga Pass Ranger Station	62.0 mi.
(via Tioga Pass)	418.0 mi.	Tuolumne Meadows	55.0 mi.
Mariposa (All-Year Highway)	44.0 mi.	Wawona	27.0 mi.
Merced (via All-Year Highway)	81.0 mi.		
Mariposa Grove (Wawona Road)	36.0 mi.		



Merced Canyon and foothills westward from Glacier Point Road

**G 2** **BADGER PASS.** This is Yosemite's principal skiing area where as many as 3000 visitors ski on a busy Sunday. The ski runs are tailored for the entire family, small beginner's slopes progressing to steeper terrain for the better skiers. The runs vary in length from one-half to two miles. There are two T-bar Constan lifts and one rope tow. Badger Pass has a cafeteria, sales room, and ski school. During summer Badger Pass is one of the park's most beautiful wildflower gardens where such flowers as blue camas, brodiaea, leopard lily, western blue flag, columbine, larkspur, wild strawberry, various lupines, wild geranium, cow parsnips, Sierra shooting star, various pentstemons, mimulus, asters, daisies and the blackeyed susan provide an unusual display.

**G 3** **MERCED PEAK.** This is the peak you see as you look directly ahead, elevation 11,722 feet. It is so

named because it is the culminating point of the Merced River whose headwaters originate on nearby mountains.

**G 4** **PEREGOY MEADOW.** The large meadow which extends on both sides of the road just before you reach Bridalveil Creek is Peregoy Meadow. The horse trail from Clark's Station, which eventually became part of the original Wawona Road to Yosemite Valley, ran through this meadow and it was here that in 1869 the Mountain View House, one of the first hosteries in the park, was built. The Mountain View House flourished until 1875 when the old Wawona Road became a reality. The meadow was named for Mr. and Mrs. Charles Peregoy who operated the hotel.

**G 5** **BRIDALVEIL CREEK.** This creek forms the beautiful Bridalveil Waterfall. In the Bridalveil basin the creek winds through a series of delight-

ful meadows which abound with wild-flowers in mid-summer. The stream is stocked with eastern brook and rainbow trout. A public campground borders the creek for a mile or so on the right of the highway and is reached by a narrow road leading off to the right.

**G HORSE RIDGE.** To the right on **6** the horizon is Horse Ridge, a point famous for winter ski trips. Horse Ridge, 9000 feet in elevation, is directly above Ostrander Lake on the shore of which is Ostrander Ski Hut. This hut is open approximately February 15 to April 15, and is reached either on skis or by weasel trips operating out of Badger Pass. Overnight reservations must be made in advance.

**G CLARK RANGE VIEW.** Directly **7** across the canyon is the Clark Range. Mt. Clark, the peak at the right - center, is 11,506 feet in elevation and was named after Galen Clark, the first guardian of the Yosemite Grant. This peak normally retains some snow throughout the year. The prominent sugar-loaf shaped peak is Mt. Starr King, named for a well-known Unitarian pastor whose writings in the 1860's called attention to the wonders of Yosemite.

**G POTHOLE MEADOW.** Pothole **8** Meadow on the left derives its name from large depressions in the form of circular pools about five feet in diameter. Deep under the ground are hollows

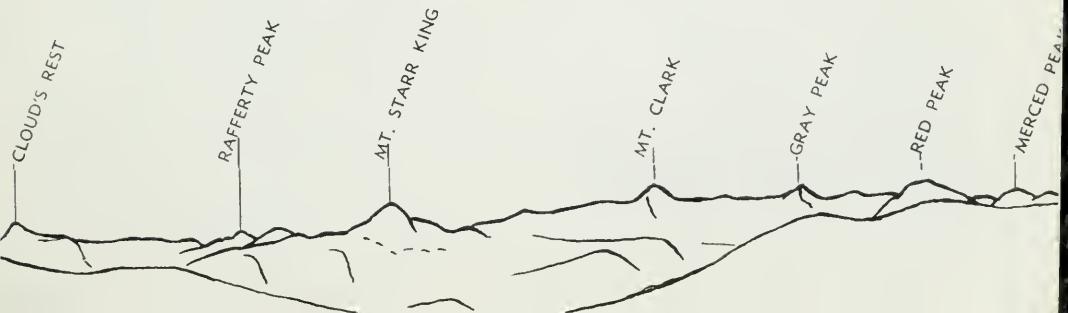
in the solid rock which were formed during the Ice Age. The hollows fill with water and form the pools. Here is one of the few definite evidences that glaciers reached such elevation. In summer a beautiful display of wildflowers grows in this meadow. In season the shooting star, corn lily and the rarely-seen marsh marigold are prominent.

**G VIEW OF SENTINEL DOME.** **9** looking ahead and slightly to the left you will see Sentinel Dome. The tree on the very summit is the world-famous Jeffrey pine which grows out of solid rock. A side road leads to the point about 200 feet below the summit. From there you can reach the summit of the dome on foot.

**G SWITCHBACKS.** This road follows much of the original road of **10** 1882. Surprisingly you drop down 600 feet to reach Glacier Point. The downhill bend of the lower part of tree trunks is the result of snow pressure on the hillside during winter when these trees were young.

**G WASHBURN POINT.** In the **11** 1870's and 1880's the Washburn Brothers drove their visitors from their Hotel Wawona either to Glacier Point or to the turn-around at the present Washburn Point, thus accounting for the name. Even without the view of Yosemite Valley the sweeping scene of the high Sierra from this point is most impressive. Some visitors today believe that they are at Glacier Point and return without going any farther.

Clark Range from Glacier Point Road



**G GLACIER POINT.** From Glacier Point, approximately 300 yards beyond the hotel, you can see one of the most inspiring views possible in the park. From here you may look at Yosemite Valley, 3214 feet below, Yosemite Falls, North Dome, Basket Dome, Tenaya Canyon, Half Dome, Liberty Cap, Nevada Fall (upper) and Vernal Fall, as well as many peaks of the high Sierra. These may be identified with the aid of the accompanying sketch. The sketch on the opposite page will locate features seen in Yosemite Valley below. About 750 miles of trails wander through this country within the park. (Further information in Clark's Trail Guides, available at museums and gift shops.) A path swinging off towards Half Dome leads to an overlook station where the geologic story is shown. No glaciers can be seen from this point. There are more than 20 glaciers and remnants of glaciers in the park, but all are located on the shaded, far sides of the high peaks. Only snow fields are to be seen from here. The name Glacier Point comes from the fact that during the glacial period two trunk glaciers, one in Tenaya Canyon (left of Half Dome) and the other in Little Yosemite Valley (right of Half Dome) joined in one huge glacier rising some 700 feet above this point.

The small Mountain House with cafeteria beside the Glacier Point Hotel is the reconstructed original one-story Glacier Point Hotel built by C. E. Peregoy of Peregoy Meadows and Mountain View House, probably about 1872. Dur-

ing the first winter it was crushed flat by snow. James McCauley then gave Peregoy \$600 for the wreck and constructed the present two-story Mountain House from its materials. It is the oldest structure still in use in the park. The hotel was built in 1917 by the Desmond Company which, following receivership, emerged as the Yosemite National Park Company and in 1925 joined with the Curry Camping Company to become the Yosemite Park and Curry Co. of today. This company now operates the Glacier Point Hotel. During the summer naturalist-guided walks about Glacier Point start near the comfort station. A man-made spectacle which attracts considerable interest is the FIREFALL. Produced nightly during the summer and on special occasions during the remainder of the year, it consists of a cascading stream of burning embers from a fire built at the tip of Glacier Point. The fire burns about one-half a cord of bark taken from dead-and-down red fir trees. When a signal is given from below, an employee of the hotel pushes the embers slowly over the cliff, using a long-handled rake. The coals drop almost 1000 feet to a ledge where they die out. The firefall is thought to have been originated by James McCauley in 1871 or 1872. After years of intermittent firefalls the practice was eventually abandoned for a time. In 1899 David A. Curry revived it as a regular feature of camp entertainment, and now it is admired by thousands who view it from many vantage points.

The Yosemite High Sierra from Glacier Point



Features of Yosemite Valley as seen from Glacier Point

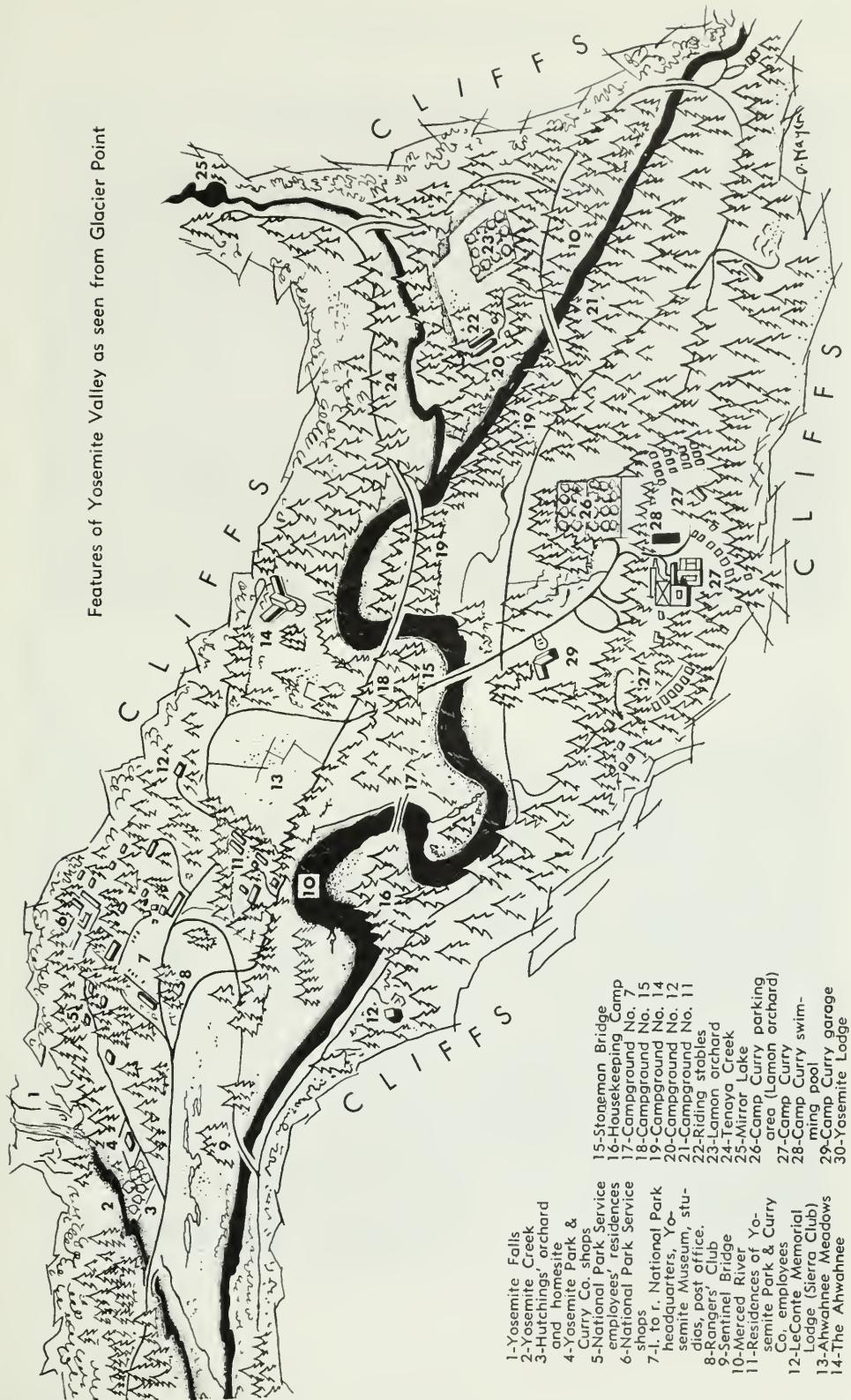




Exhibit and overlook at Glacier Point; Yosemite's high Sierra, Nevada and Vernal Falls

### YOESMITE VALLEY TO PARK ENTRANCE AT CARL INN

(Total driving distance 17.5 miles)

#### **C THE BIG OAK FLAT ROAD.**

**1** This road leads to Crane Flat junction in the park where you may either continue ahead to Manteca and U. S. Highway 99 or, turning to the right over Tioga Pass, to Highway 395. The Big Oak Flat Road was named for the small community of Big Oak Flat 45 miles distant where an unusually large and beautiful oak tree once grew. The original road ran along the wooded slopes above. It was a toll road completed on July 17, 1874, one month after the completion of its competitor, the Coulterville Road. These were the first roads into the valley. The Big Oak Flat and Yosemite Company, with a 50-year franchise, organized in 1867 to build a

wagon road from Colfax Springs to Yosemite Valley, engaged a company of Italians to construct the road down the cliffs. No cement was used—the rocks being wedged in such a way that it was rare for any part of the road to slide. However, a big rock slide where switchbacks descend the rocky slope into the valley closed the old road permanently in the spring of 1945. The present high-gear Big Oak Flat Road, dedicated June 1940, was built at a cost of \$1,-200,000 as compared with \$40,000 for the original road.

#### **C VIEW OF COULTERVILLE ROAD.**

**2** Below you along the wooded slope down-valley is the scar of

the Coulterville Road. Park off the road just ahead if you stop here. (More about the Coulterville Road under W-4, page

**C CASCADE CREEK - TAMARACK CREEK.** Both creeks drain a relatively small forested area northwest of the valley. The two creeks join to form Cascade Falls which can be seen from the valley floor (V-4) and from the Wawona Road (W-3). Both streams are stocked with eastern brook trout. "Tamarack" was the local name given to the lodgepole pine, the tree common to the headwaters of the streams.

**WILDCAT CREEK** — Flowing in the spring and early summer only, this stream drains a small area to the southwest of Tamarack Creek.

**C VIEW OF HALF DOME, EL CAPITAN AND THE WAWONA ROAD.**

From here is one of the impressive views of Yosemite Valley with El Capitan in the middle left foreground, Half Dome in the middle background, and the Wawona Road cut through the forest on the slope across the gorge. Below is the Merced River with the Merced Road paralleling it.

**C BIG MEADOW.** The small open area in the forest below is known as Big Meadow. It is (in 1956) a privately owned area within the national park. Ponderosa pine, incense-cedar and black oak, typical of medium elevations on the west slope of the Sierra, make up the forest surrounding the meadow. These same 3 trees are the



Old Big Oak Flat Road c. 1900

most common ones immediately around you here. The old Coulterville Road (W-4) into Yosemite Valley skirts the left margin of this meadow. Over the ridge beyond Big Meadow is the Merced Canyon.

**C CRANE FLAT.** Crane Flat was **6** named from reported cries of sand-hill cranes said to have been surprised in this area in early days, probably a mistaken observation. The great blue heron is seen here occasionally to this day. Upon leaving Crane Flat entrance station you will be on a road which is steep, narrow and full of curves. In a 2 mile stretch you will drop from an elevation of about 6,500 to 4,800 feet.

**C TUOLUMNE GROVE OF BIG TREES.** **7** The giant sequoias are thought to have been seen first by white men when this grove was discovered in 1833 by Joseph Walker, expedition seeking a route across the Sierra Nevada. The grove covers about 20 acres and has approximately 25 large trees. The spur road to the right passes through the tunnel cut in the Dead Giant in 1878, one of 3 tunnel trees in the park.

**C HODGDON MEADOWS.** In the **8** early 1860's the Hodgdon family operated an overnight stopping place here for stage coach passengers. This enterprise continued until the late 1890's.

**C THE ROCKEFELLER SUGAR PINE FOREST PURCHASE.** **9** In 1939 the Rockefeller Foundation, with matching funds from the Federal Government, purchased this, one of the world's finest remaining virgin sugar pine forests for \$3,200,000 and added it to Yosemite National Park. Its 20,000 acres also included practically all of the Tuolumne Grove of giant sequoias.

**C CARL INN.** In the large meadow **10** to the right just before you leave the park was Carl Inn, a popular resort owned and operated by Donna Carlon. It was a regular stop on the Hetch Hetchy Tour. The Inn was purchased and razed in 1940 by the government after being destroyed twice by flood, once by fire, and once by snow. Cross the bridge over the South Fork of the Tuolumne River just beyond the park boundary you can follow the road to the Hetch Hetchy section of Yosemite National Park.

Hodgdon's historic ranch and stage coach stop on old Big Oak Flat Road (running along fence) present Crane Flat Road runs at right angles to it at lower right.





Carl Inn before its removal in 1940

## CRANE FLAT TO TIOGA PASS

(Total driving distance 48 miles)

**T**HE TIOGA ROAD. This road climbs about 48 miles up the western slope of the Sierra, becoming the highest highway in California at Tioga Pass, elevation almost 10,000 feet. For the first 3.4 miles it follows generally the old Big Oak Flat Road which it crosses at right angles at Gin Flat. Twenty-one miles of the Tioga Road, located approximately in the middle, is the old steep, winding, narrow road built in 1883 by the Great Sierra Consolidated Silver Company. Although improved today this road still retains much of its old character and charm. Slow and careful driving along this section is safe. The improved road on either side of the 21-mile stretch was completed in 1938. Negotiations are under way for a new section to replace the old road but portions of the old road will be preserved as an historical exhibit. Along this road you will pass successively through forests of sugar and Jeffery pine, red fir and lodge-pole pine, with the limber-branched western whitebark pine at Tioga Pass. In winter the Tioga

Road is closed by snow.

(Additional information under T-7, page 97.)

**T**HE CRANE FLAT. During the days of the original Big Oak Flat Road, Mr. Gobin operated a hotel and Mr. Hurst a saloon here at Crane Flat. Very little was known about these operations but diaries of early day travelers mention them. The hotel was built on the approximate location of the present Blister Rust Control Camp.

**T**HE GIN FLAT. Scattered all through the high Sierra are meadows known as flats, since most of the surrounding country was very hilly and steep. Cattle and sheepmen used these as pastures before the park was established. Apparently there was considerable activity at Gin Flat in the summertime while John B. Curtin, once state senator and cattleman, headquartered there. A portion of the ruins of a cabin back from



Former Gobin's Hotel, building on left with porch, and Hurst's Saloon, shake-roof beyond team. Road from lower left is the Old Big Oak Flat Road with the Coulterville Road cut-off running off lower right.

the road consists of parts of the old Tamarack Lodge, moved by Curtin from Tamarack Flat and parts of the original cabin of 1882. Robert A. Curtin, brother of John, reports that the name Gin Flat was given to this meadow after the first freight team over the Big Oak Flat, presumably heading for Yosemite Valley, lost a barrel of gin here from the wagon. As a result the cowboys and road workers became gloriously "ginned up," thus establishing the name. Contrast the magnificent Jeffrey pine near the road with the wind-swept Jeffrey pine on top of Sentinel Dome.

To the right of Gin Flat is a portion of the original Big Oak Flat Road. It can be traveled about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles farther to Tamarack Flat and Tamarack Creek campground, and another  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles to Cascade Creek. Both of these creeks are stocked with eastern brook trout. If you follow this road another couple of miles you will find the site of Gentry, a former toll station at the head of the grade on the old Big Oak Flat Road.

The roadside from Gin Flat to the White Wolf junction has a fine growth

of red fir. In this area you will also notice some evidence of glacial polish.

**T 3 SOUTH FORK OF TUOLUMNE.** The South Fork of the Tuolumne River starts some 5 miles beyond the place where the road crosses it. It usually dries up in late summer or shortly thereafter.

**T 4 SMOKY JACK CAMPGROUND.** This beautiful, small, wooded campground bears the nickname of an early sheepman who, prior to the establishment of the park, became known as a character in this region. Smoky Jack, whose real name was John Connel, started with a few sheep which he herded personally until he became sheep-rich. "He lived mostly on beans. In the morning after his bean breakfast he filled his pockets from the pot with dripping beans for luncheon, which he ate in handfuls as he followed the flock. His overalls and boots soon, of course, became thoroughly saturated and instead of wearing thin, wore thicker and stouter and, by sitting down to rest

from time to time, parts of all vegetation, leaves, petals, etc., were embedded in them, together with wool fibers, butterfly wings, mica crystals, fragments of nearly everything that part of the world contained—rubbed in, embedded and coarsely stratified, so that these wonderful garments grew to have a rich geological and biological significance . . .” (John Muir)



Siesta Lake on Tioga Road

**T 5 SIESTA LAKE.** This spring-fed little lake encircled by lodgepole pine and red firs is not over 5 feet deep and hence any fish which might be planted in it would be subject to winter-kill. No live fish have been seen in the lake since 1954. The name is unofficial and is probably given because it makes a delightful spot along the Tioga Road for rest or picnic. The road was diverted at this point to avoid despoiling the charm of this lake. The rare Arctic three-toed woodpecker nests here occasionally.

**T 6 WHITE WOLF.** About 1850 John Meyer, a cattleman, while leading a posse to recover horses stolen by Indians, came upon this lovely Alpine meadow. An Indian encampment, whose chief was White Wolf, had stopped here for a short time. Meyer named the place in honor of the chief. This is near the junction of the new and old Tioga Roads. The White Wolf Lodge is about 1 mile off the main paved road on the

old Tioga Road. This popular high Sierra camp, at an elevation of about 8,000 feet, is open from approximately July 1 to September 1.

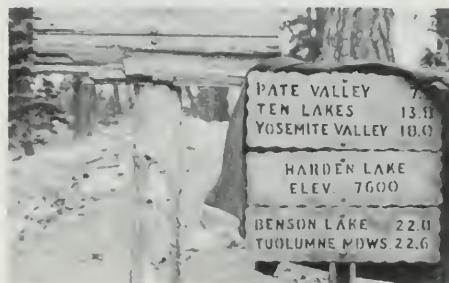
**T 7 OLD TIOGA ROAD.** Between White Wolf junction and Tuolumne Meadows you drive along a section of the *old* Tioga Road. Twenty-one miles of this road remains in public use and has been only slightly improved since 1883 when the Great Sierra Consolidated Silver Company built it for an access to their headquarters at Bennettville near Tioga Pass where they were driving the famed Sheepherder Tunnel. It cost over \$64,000. This old mining road was purchased by Stephen T. Mather and some friends and presented the National Park Service in 1915. A short distance beyond the junction starts a downgrade of some five miles which drops about 1,300 feet and terminates at Yosemite Creek. The name Tioga comes from the Tioga Mining District which may, in turn, have received its name from Tioga County N. Y. Tioga is an Iroquois Indian name meaning “where it forks.”



Old Tioga Road - 1956

**T LUKENS LAKE TRAIL JUNCTION.** This trail, near Dark Hole

**8** Meadows, is part of the park's trail system. Wooden directional signs formerly used along these trails were for some unknown reason often destroyed by bears. The metal trail sign seen a little back from the road to the right is made by cutting with an acetylene torch and is considered "bear proof."



New metal trail signs replacing wooden signs destroyed by bear

**T YOSEMITE CREEK.** Yosemite

**9** Creek is the stream that creates Yosemite Falls. Like many streams in the Sierra, Yosemite Creek dries up in late summer after all snow in its drainage basin has melted. This basin faces the sun so that snow here melts sooner than on the more protected slopes. Because of the granite structure of the country and thin soil coverage, springs are uncommon and contribute little or no water to Yosemite Creek. At this location are a summer ranger station and public campground. The campground, at an elevation of 7,200 feet, accommodates approximately 30 camps, has outdoor tables and benches. A trail follows down the creek 6.3 miles to the top of Yosemite Falls thence into Yosemite Valley.

**T TOP OF YOSEMITE CREEK**

**10** GRADE. Leaving the campground you start up the Yosemite Creek grade. Here in a distance of about 2½

miles you climb from 7,200 to 8,200 feet. This road climbs up the side of a moraine piled up by ancient Yosemite Glacier. Here you will pass through one of the most beautiful groves of quaking aspens in the park. The quaking aspen rarely grow below 5,000 feet elevation although it is said to be the most widely distributed tree in the world. The tree has a smooth white or cream colored bark covered with black markings. The leaves are shiny, smooth, roundish, and their characteristic fluttering accounts for the name.

**T PORCUPINE FLAT CAMP-GROUND.**

**11** One of the smaller campgrounds is situated in the delightful flat meadow surrounded by a red fir forest through which runs Porcupine Creek. 1.2 miles along the road towards Tuolumne Meadows is the entrance to Porcupine Creek Campground, an old Indian campsite, located downstream from Porcupine Flat. From here a trail leads into Yosemite Valley and to North Dome. Elevation at this place is 8,015 feet.

**T SNOW FLAT.** Approximately 5

**12** miles beyond Porcupine Campground is Snow Flat. A snow survey station is maintained here. Several times each winter National Park Service rangers make trips on skis or snowshoes to take snow measurements in order to determine the amount of moisture which will be available to the Central Valley and Bay Region the following summer. Here at an elevation of 8,710 feet, some of the deepest snow in the park is recorded.

**MOUNT HOFFMANN**—10,836 feet

high, is seen from this point, rising from the west side of May Lake (out of view). In 1881 silver was found on Mt. Hoffmann and the Mt. Hoffmann Mining District was organized but soon fizzled out. The mountain was named for



Mt. Hoffmann from Snow Flat

Charles T. Hoffman, principal topographer of the Whitney Survey of 1863. Mt. Hoffman marks the approximate geographic center of the park.

**T** **MAY LAKE JUNCTION.** Just beyond Snow Flat is the May Lake junction. A steep but well-used foot trail of about 1.7 miles will take you to the May Lake High-Sierra Camp. Located at about 9,300 feet in elevation,

the camp is open from approximately July 1 to September 10. The lake was named for Lucy Mayotta Browne who, in 1870, married Charles Hoffmann of the Whitney Survey.

**TENAYA LAKE GRADE**—After leaving the May Lake junction you start down the Tenaya Lake grade. Here in about two miles you descend some 600 feet. To your left you will see Cathedral Peak (elevation 10,993 feet), Tenaya Lake (elevation 8,141 feet), and Tenaya Peak (10,700 feet).

**T** **TENAYA LAKE.** Tenaya Lake was **14** named in honor of Chief Tenaya of the Yosemite Indians. On the early morning of May 22, 1851, pursuing the Yosemite Indians and, from the vicinity of Tenaya Lake Grade, spotting their camps on the lake, the Mariposa Battalion, under Capt. John Boling, made such a hasty attack clothed mostly in their long red underwear that it gave rise to an Indian story of "red devils." The capture of the Yosemites was completed



Tenaya Lake

when Chief Tenaya was taken near Yosemite Valley on June 12. Dr. Lafayette Bunnell, who was surgeon for the expedition, named the lake after the chief but when the old man heard of this he was unhappy and told the party that the lake already was named Py-we-ack, Lake of the Shining Rocks. The lake, a glacial lake, is about a mile long, one-half mile wide, and a little over a hundred feet deep. It is stocked with rainbow and eastern brook trout. As you pass along the built-up road on the northwest side of Tenaya Lake, you will see some of the finest examples of glacial polish in the park.

**T GHOST FOREST.** This is a forest of lodgepole pines which were killed in insect epidemics. Once every two years in July and August the lodgepole pine needle miner moth lays eggs at the base of the needles. After the larva or worm emerges from a small hole, the needles turn chestnut brown. Soon the needles fall off. Bark beetles attack often follow needleminer epidemics and kill the trees. Air spraying operations have been carried on recently with a hope of reducing widespread destruction. (You may read more about trees in "Cone-bearing Trees of Yosemite" and "Broad-leaved Trees of Yosemite.") Off to the right of the road is a smooth rock surface with scattered boulders. These angular boulders were dropped during the recession of the last glacier of the ice age.

**T EAST END OF OLD GRADE — MT. CONNESS.** For a description of this old grade read T-7. At no other place along the park roads, except near Snow Flat, can the mountain hemlock more easily be seen. It normally prefers northern exposure of 9000 feet or more where snow banks linger. John Muir called the mountain hemlock the most singularly beautiful of all the Cali-

fornia conifers. The elegance of this graceful tree-mountaineer is ever refreshing in contrast to the rugged staunchness of its associate trees, the western white pine, lodgepole pine, Sierra juniper and whitebark pine.

**MT. CONNESS** is the most distant and prominent peak seen as you look straight ahead. On the crest of the Sierra Nevada, 12,556 feet in elevation, this mountain was named for John Conness, Senator from California who, on March 28, 1864, introduced in the U. S. Congress the bill establishing the Yosemite Grant, consisting of Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees.

**T FAIRVIEW DOME.** This is typical of granite domes in Yosemite and 17 the Sierra. Like other granite throughout the region its form resulted from the cooling of molten "magma" or rock, beneath layers of rock which were formed from sea deposits. The manner in which this molten mass cooled determined the way in which this rock weathers, by exfoliating in "shells" — as if removing the layers of an onion.



Fairview Dome

**T TUOLUMNE MEADOWS.** In this 18 region are the headwaters of the Tuolumne River. From here easy hikes will take you to many beautiful lakes and streams which are typical of the grandeur of the Sierra. A store, fountain, and



Tuolumne Meadows and Cathedral Peak

service station are open from approximately July 1 to September 10. The public campground with water and sanitation facilities accommodates about 350 camps. The elevation is 8600 feet. Looking southwest from Tuolumne Meadows you see Cathedral Peak, 10,933 feet in elevation, and Unicorn Peak, 10,849 feet in elevation. Tuolumne is an Indian name, probably of a tribe along the lower course of this river.

**T LYELL FORK, TUOLUMNE RIVER.** Just beyond the store you **19** will cross the Tuolumne River which begins at Mt. Lyell Glacier on the extreme eastern boundary of the park. This ice body, roughly one mile wide and one-half mile broad, is the largest glacier within the park. Mt. Lyell, 13,090 feet in elevation and the highest peak in the park, was named for Sir Charles Lyell, a leading geologist of the past century.

**T L E M B E R T DOME — SODA SPRINGS.** The lopsided appearance of this dome is the result of glaciers pushing up the slope and forcing chunks of rock off the steep side. The scallops over the face of the dome were worn by sub-glacial streams which followed the courses of these shallow trenches. Patches of glistening glacial polish cover the face of the dome. Ascent of 800 foot Lambert Dome is safe only under expert guidance. It was named for Jean Baptiste Lambert, sheep man and hermit who homesteaded Tuolumne Meadows in 1885. His home was built near the soda springs 1 mile to your left after crossing the Tuolumne River.

**TUOLUMNE MEADOWS HIGH SIERRA CAMP.** The road to your right after you pass the Tuolumne River bridge leads to the Tuolumne Meadows High Sierra Camp which can



Soda Springs, Tuolumne Meadows

accommodate about 125 people and is open from about July 1 to September 15. It is one of five hikers' and horse-back riders' camps along the high Sierra loop. This scenic route may be covered with relatively easy hiking if spread over 5 days or more. Other camps are at May Lake, Glen Aulin, Vogelsang and Merced Lake. All furnish comfortable beds and good meals and limited hiker supplies. Motorists may be accommodated at the Tuolumne Meadows camp.

**T MORaine OF ROCKS LEFT BY THE GLACIERS.** The roadcut, **21** known as the Blue Slide, exposes here a section of a rounded hill composed of loose rock and fine material left after the front of a glacier melted back. This moraine swings in a great arc toward the peaks to the right (south).

**T DANA FORK OF THE TUOLUMNE RIVER.** Beyond the turn-off **22** road to the Tuolumne High Sierra Camp the main highway follows along the Dana Fork of the Tuolumne River which has its source on Mt. Dana.

**T TUOLUMNE PEAK.** Looking back **23** down the highway towards Tuolumne Meadows you can see prominent Tuolumne Peak, 10,875 feet in elevation, located a short distance north of the May Lake High Sierra Camp.

**T MAMMOTH PEAK.** Looking straight ahead along the road from this point the great rounded form of Mammoth Peak rises to an elevation of 12,225 feet.

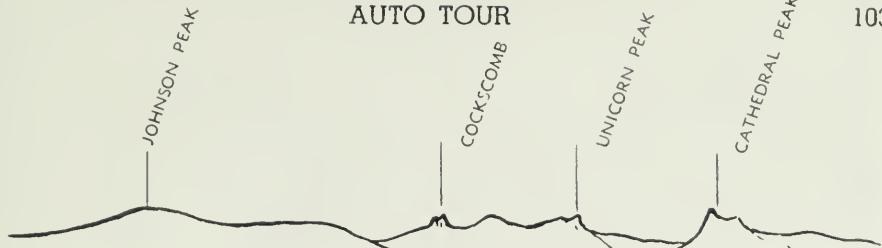
**T MT. GIBBS.** Named for Wolcott Gibbs, well-known professor of science at Harvard at the turn of the century and life-long friend of Professor Whitney, California State geologist, Mt. Gibbs (seen directly ahead) rises to an elevation of 12,000 feet.

**T MT. DANA.** Mt. Dana can be climbed from Tioga Pass with relative ease. It is not only the second highest peak in the park, elevation 13,053 feet, but it is one of the most colorful. (Inquire of park ranger at the Tioga Pass Entrance Station.) Noted for its beautiful summer wildflower gardens, it was named for James Dana of Yale University, pioneer geologist of the past century.

Looking back towards Tuolumne Meadows the skyline, as shown in the sketch opposite identifies Johnson Cockscomb, Unicorn and Cathedral Peaks. As you drive westward towards Tuolumne Meadows you will see these peaks framed strikingly by the road corridor through the forest. Roadside signs will aid you to recognize them.

**T TIOGA PEAK.** The prominent **27** peak before you is Tioga Peak, elevation 11,513 feet. Tioga Peak, like Tioga Lake, Tioga Pass, and Tioga Road, comes from an Iroquois Indian name meaning "Where it forks."

**T KUNA CREST.** If you look back **28** and to the left from this point in 0.6 of a mile of Tioga Pass Entrance Station you will see a range of peaks known as Kuna Crest at whose northern (right) end stands Mammoth



Skyline westward from Dana Meadows

Peak. This crest partially covered with snow even through the summer, is probably named from the Shoshonean Indian word "Kuna," used in the Mono Indian dialect of this vicinity to mean "fire wood."

**T** **TIOGA ENTRANCE STATION.**  
**29** Tioga Pass Entrance Station, one of four entrances to Yosemite National Park, is the highest automobile pass in the Sierra and in California, 9941 feet. To your right is the rock formation at the base of Mt. Dana known locally as the "Lion's Head." As you

leave Yosemite National Park you enter Inyo National Forest. The management of these two areas differ in that in national forests are economic and recreational pursuits such as lumbering, grazing, mining, hunting, and resorts, while in national parks the purpose is ". . . to conserve the scenery, the natural and historical objects, and the wildlife therein . . . and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." Come again!

### INTERESTING POINTS BETWEEN MERCED AND YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

(Total driving distance to park boundary 68.5 miles)

**CITY OF MERCED** — Located in the San Joaquin Valley just south of the Merced River, this city of about 20,000 takes its name from that stream. It is a center of extensive farming and dairy industry. Merced came into existence on February 8, 1872, when a subsidiary corporation of the Central Pacific Railroad auctioned off building lots. The site was deliberately selected as being centrally located in the San Joaquin Valley and as the gateway to Yosemite. The desirability of moving county seats to the railroad was also foreseen and was realized when the county government moved from Snelling to Merced in 1872. The early inhabitants expected Merced to be the important town in the valley and for a while it surpassed Fresno in population.

(4.5 miles from So. Pac. R. R. Depot)

**FILICE & PERELLI CANNERY** — The large establishment across the Santa Fe Railroad tracks is the Filice & Perrelli Cannery and Kadota Fig orchards. In addition to the Kadota figs, the plant packs Elberta peaches, apricots, boysenberries and green gage plums. This cannery has the distinction of being the world's largest canner and packer of Kadota figs.

**MERCED COUNTY** — Formed from a part of Mariposa County, "Mother of Counties," in 1885. Merced County covers an area of some 1,995 square miles with a population of 80,000. It is known for its fruit, cotton, beef cattle and dairy products.

(2. miles)

**FANCHER MONUMENT** — South of the highway a shaft commemorates Clarence L. Fancher, a well-known local grain rancher and leader in community affairs around the turn of the century. The monument is over Fancher's grave.

**DEL MONTE ORCHARDS** — As you pass the Fancher Monument you will also pass through the Del Monte cling peach and Kadota fig orchards, owned and operated by the California Packing Corporation. The peach orchard has approximately 2800 acres and 250,000 trees and is the largest of its kind in the world. The fig orchard contains about 600 acres and 54,000 trees. The fig trees are kept pruned down to produce better quality for canning and to permit picking from the ground. Practically all fruit grown here is canned.

(3 miles from Filice &amp; Perelli)

**PLANADA** — This town of around 1000 persons, received its name in a unique manner. A contest for a suitable name was held in 1911 from which the Spanish word for "plain" was chosen. Formerly the post office here was named Geneva and the railroad name was Whitton.

**VIEW OF THE SIERRA NEVADA MOUNTAINS** — Leaving Planada you will see the Sierra Nevada Mountains directly ahead of you. It was from this approximate area that in 1776 the Spanish discoverers saw the mountains and gave them the name Sierra Nevada, meaning "Snowy Range of Mountains." The Sierra Nevada is approximately 430 miles long, lying in a northwest-southeast direction, having a breadth of 40 to 80 miles. The range is located entirely in California except for a small portion in Nevada near Lake Tahoe. The western approach is long, winding and gradual but the eastern approach is abrupt.

(4.6 miles from Planada)

**MILLERTON ROAD** — Near the point where the highway crosses the Merced-Mariposa County line is the Millerton Road. This is the original Stockton-Los Angeles road. It was constructed in the foothills to avoid the many small creeks and thick tules of the valley floor.

(2 miles)

**MARIPOSA COUNTY** — Mariposa County was one of the largest of the original 27 counties of California. An old Mexican grant comprising a portion of this area was given to Juan Bautista Alvarado in 1844. Purchased for John C. Fremont in 1847 for \$3,000, it was resold in 1863 for \$6,000,000. From the formation of the county in 1850 until 1893, people of various areas succeeded to form separate counties, namely the present counties of Merced, Madera, Mono, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, Inyo, Kern and a portion of Los Angeles County. Hence Mariposa County became known as "The Mother of Counties." In this county an official U. S. Mint was located at Mt. Ophir where six-sided \$50 gold coins were made. These coins are valued today up to \$10,000 each. Mariposa County is known for its cattle, hogs, sheep, poultry, timber and mining. Zinc, lead, manganese and tungsten are found in quantity, as well as small deposits of nickle, cobalt, barium and titanium.

(9.5 miles)

**CATHAY VALLEY** — This pleasant rolling farm and cattle land never saw much mining. It received its name from Andrew Cathay who purchased it in 1854 for a sum of \$1,500 from George W. Evans and Jacob Hill. Stone fences throughout this immediate area were built during the 1840's and 50's by Chinese labor.

**JOAQUIN MURIETA AND HOR-NITOS** — Joaquin Murieta was a Robin



Mariposa in 1850's

Hood-like Mexican bandit who roamed the area from Los Angeles to Stockton in the 1850's. (According to recent studies he may have been a legendary figure generally accepted in folklore.) It is said that he found friendliness in the little mining town of Hornitos of the gold rush days. Remains may still be seen of an underground passage leading from the dance hall in Hornitos which Murieta may have found useful for escape when things grew too hot. Hornitos, Mexican for "little bake oven," is about 10 miles northwest of Cathay Valley. It derived its name from the presence of many odd Mexican graves or tombs that sat on top of the ground, built of stone in the shape of little bake ovens. (the fascinating history of this foothill gold mining country may be followed in "A Guide to the Mother Lode Country," available at museums and gift shops.)

(7.6 miles from Cathay)

**AGUA FRIA** — Agua Fria — cool water — was the name of the town which grew up around the Agua Fria Mine and which was the first county seat of Mariposa County from 1850 to 1854. Once located about a half-mile up the course of Agua Fria Creek (dry most of the year), this once-important

community has disappeared completely. Its name was derived from a stream of water gushing from the mountainside. An historical marker along the highway was placed by the Mariposa County Chamber of Commerce.

(4.2 miles)

**MARIPOSA** — In 1806 Padre Munoz of the Moraga Expedition recorded in his diary: "This place is called (place) of the mariposa (butterflies) because of their great multitude, especially at night and morning . . . One of the corporals of the expedition got one in his ear, causing him considerable annoyance and no little discomfort in its extraction." Located on the Fremont Grant (described under Mariposa County above), Mariposa became county seat when the county government was moved from Agua Fria in 1854. At that time the courthouse was built. It is now the oldest courthouse in continuous use in the State of California. The seats and bar have remained unchanged through the years. The belfry clock, operated on cables and pendulum alone, was brought around The Horn from England in 1866. Its bell has been chiming ever since. The only newspaper in the county, a weekly, was started here January 1854. First published as the Mariposa Chron-

icle, through a change of ownership in June 1855 it became the Mariposa Gazette. The paper has been in continuous publication.

(7 miles)

**SIERRA NATIONAL FOREST —**

Beyond the sign "Entering Sierra National Forest" is part of  $1\frac{1}{3}$  million acres of land administered as one of the areas under the National Forest Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. These forested lands are managed for lumbering, grazing, hunting, mining and the like under such regulations as to assure as far as possible continuing renewable natural resources.

(3.6 miles to top of hill)

**BRICEBURG GRADE —** In approximately  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles this grade has a drop of 1,200 feet. Bear Creek Canyon is on the south side of the road. The original road from the top of the Briceburg Grade to El Portal was built by convict labor.

(2.4 miles)

**MERCED RIVER —** From the foot of Briceberg Grade to the park you will follow the Merced River. For description read V-35, page 77.

(6.1 miles)

**RICHARDSONS —** An old limestone quarry was operated here by the Yosemite Portland Cement Company. It was purchased in 1944 by the Kaiser interests which closed the quarry and removed the machinery.

**YOSEMITE VALLEY RAILROAD**

—Across the river you will see what remains of the railroad bed of the Yosemite Valley Railroad, constructed from 1905 to 1907 at an estimated cost of \$10,000,000. Running 78 miles from Merced to El Portal it was forced out of business in 1945 after the Yosemite Lumber Company and the Portland Cement Company ceased operations and private automobile travel over the new Merced highway diminished passenger train travel.



Ancient folded rocks near geologic exhibit on Merced Road with railroad tracks above.

(1.7 miles)

**GEOLOGICAL EXHIBIT** — Between Richardsons and Savage Trading Post a geological exhibit may be seen on the right of way. It describes the oldest rocks of the Yosemite region, to be seen across the river. These were formed as ancient sea deposits changed into rock. They produced the original Sierra range now largely worn away, its place being taken by the granite of the present Sierra.

(1.6 miles)

**SAVAGE TRADING POST** — Not far from the junction of the Merced River and its south fork stood the first trading post of the area, established by James D. Savage in 1849. Savage employed native Indians to mine gold for him. How much gold dust Savage acquired was never reported but he was rumored to have had "barrels full" of it. After an attack in 1850 by Yosemite Indians Savage moved the trading post to a new location near Mariposa.

**HITES COVE MINE** — About three miles upstream on the south fork of the Merced River is Hites Cove where John Hite operated a mine from 1861 to 1882. Nearly \$3,000,000 in gold was reported taken from this mine with no great depth needed for shafts.

(1.5 miles)

**CLEARING HOUSE MINE** — Between the south fork and Incline is the site of the Clearing House Mine. The approximate site is recognized by several houses on the opposite side of the river. About \$1,000,000 in gold was taken from this mine. The shafts were 1100 feet deep. Operations were stopped in the early 1940s' because the mine could not be freed of water.

(1 mile)

**INCLINE** — Here the Yosemite Sugar Pine Company carried on logging

operations, using a two mile incline up the side of the mountain. It was operated by hooking a cable to a loaded flat car at the top of the mountain and to an empty flat car at the bottom of the mountain. As the loaded car descended the grade it would pull the empty car to the top. This operation took place from 1924 to 1945.

(3 miles)

**TUNGSTEN MILL** — The mill which you see across the river receives tungsten ore from open mines in the immediate vicinity. This operation, which started producing in the spring of 1955, is the only active mining and milling in this area.

(0.8 of a mile)

**BARIUM MINE** — Across the river is the site of the El Portal Mining Company's barium mine. The mine stopped operations about 1947, principally because of the decreasing use of barium in drilling oil wells.

(1.2 miles to store)

**EL PORTAL** — This community of approximately 200 people became the eastern terminus of the Yosemite Valley Railroad in 1907. About the time the laying of the railroad was completed the railroad company built the 8 miles of wagon road from the railhead to Yosemite Valley so that horse-drawn stages could carry train passengers into the park. This was when El Portal received its name. The railroad station stood on the approximate location of the El Portal Motor Inn and the Standard Oil service station, while a hotel stood on the hill a short distance to the northeast. Directly across the river from the El Portal store the Yosemite Lumber Company conducted an operation from 1911 to 1924 similar to the one at Incline.

(1 mile)

**YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK** — Upon entering the park turn to page 67 and follow the self-guiding tour for Yosemite Valley.

## INTERESTING POINTS BETWEEN FRESNO AND YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

(Total driving distance to park boundary 61.2 miles)

**CITY OF FRESNO**—This city, the Fresno County seat, with a population of 108,000, because of its central location has become the principal wholesale and retail distribution point in the San Joaquin Valley. Today it is hard to believe that in 1872 a subsidiary of the Central Pacific Railroad which staked out the town in the heart of the San Joaquin desert could find no buyers for its "choice" lots. In this desolation where there was no railroad, town, water, or settlement, the company permitted any newcomers to settle on the lots provided they would purchase them should they decide to remain. Land values unexpectedly increased. In July 1874 when the railroad reached this point there were 29 business and 25 private dwellings. The coming of the railroad encouraged people to move down from the foothills and the county seat, together with the entire population and many of its buildings, moved from Millerton that year. Fresno means "ash tree" in Spanish. In 1806 Lt. Moraga named a "rivulet from the Sierra" San Joaquin in respect to the parent of Mary, the mother of Christ, and subsequently the name became associated with the southern central valley of California.

**COUNTY OF FRESNO**—Fresno County was formed in 1856 out of the then huge Mariposa County with Millerton on the San Joaquin River the first county seat from 1856 to 1874. Fresno County embraces 3,830,400 acres and has an average farm production of about \$350,000,000 annually as of 1954. Principal crops of the county are dairy products, livestock, poultry, turkeys, cotton, raisins and grapes, figs, peaches, alfalfa and grain.

(From Hotel Californian  
approx. 8 miles)

**FRIANT DAM AND MILLERTON LAKE**—The road branching off from Highway 41 at Pinedale leads to Friant Dam on the San Joaquin River. Millerton Lake, formed behind this dam, received its name from the town of Millerton which, along with the site of old Fort Miller (1851-1863), was inundated with the formation of the reservoir. About one-half of Friant Dam and Millerton Lake lies each in Fresno and Madera Counties. Millerton Lake, a local water sports area, is administered by the National Park Service as a National Recreation Area.

(2.3 miles)

**MADERA COUNTY**—The second youngest county in the State of California, Madera County was formed from a portion of Fresno County in 1893. Its name is from the town of Madera, the county seat, a Spanish word meaning "lumber," adopted because of the thriving lumber industry there. Madera was the western terminus of the lumber flume which stretched some 65 miles from the Sierra (described under Old Lumbering Operations below). Madera County is divided about equally in plains, foothills and high mountain country, the latter including a part of Yosemite National Park and all of the Devils Postpile National Monument on the east of the range. Its crops are much the same as those of Fresno County with dairying, vineyarding and poultry raising the largest industries. Recreation is an important industry in the mountains.

(7.3 miles)

**MADERA CANAL**—This canal is a part of the huge Central Valley irriga-

tion project developed by the Bureau of Reclamation. It operates from Shasta Dam in northern California through the great Central Valley to the southern part of the San Joaquin Valley, carrying much-needed irrigation water to the thirsty farm lands of this part of California.

(2.3 miles)

**JUNCTION HIGHWAY 145 AND 41**—From this point on, Highway 41 is known as the "Yosemite Discovery Road." On nearby Table Mountain stands a 33'-high cross erected by public-spirited citizens of Madera County in connection with Easter sunrise services.



Great Flume of the Madera Flume and Trading Company—abandoned in 1932

(2.0 miles)

**SAN JOAQUIN EXPERIMENTAL RANGE**—Beyond the junction of Highway 145 and 41 is the 5000-acre San Joaquin Experimental Range operated by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and the University of California. Range and cattle improvements are the primary

purposes of the station. The U. S. Forest Service has developed grasses here which increase range capacities. The University of California Department of Animal Husbandry studies hereditary characteristics and herd improvement.

#### **CHUCKCHANSI INDIANS—**

The area around Coarsegold was settled originally by the Chuckchansi Indians. As white men came into the area Chief Black Hawk was instrumental in keeping the tribe friendly. After several years the Chuckchansi tribe became docile and lazy, and the Indian women would marry white settlers to be assured of food. This was a help to settlers who wanted women willing to "rough it," and who would do without conveniences. Black Hawk Mountain, which is the butte to the right of the road, is named after the Chuckchansi Chief.

(15.5 miles)

**CALIFORNIA DIVISION OF FORESTRY**—The State Division of Forestry has a headquarters near Coarsegold. Its main purpose is fire control to save grazing lands and stop soil erosion. This headquarters is unique because it is operated under the joint control of the Division of Forestry and the California Youth Authority. Approximately 120 men 18-23 years in age are sent from various institutions throughout the state to this "honor camp" for rehabilitation. From here they assist in fire control and man fire lookouts in the area approximately 100 mile radius in cooperation with the U. S. Forest Service and the National Park Service.

(1 mile)

**COARSEGOLD**—The gold rush of 1849 brought many prospectors to this area. The town was named for the type of gold found here. By 1850 the community boasted 10,000 inhabitants. One nugget found by two Texas brothers was worth \$15,000. It is reported that \$18,000,000 in gold was taken from here in a four-month period. By 1866

the nuggets had become scarce and the white men moved on but the patient Chinese came in, some to make fortunes in gold dust. By 1880 the finds were over but the town was established.

**GENERAL BOX COMPANY SAW-MILL**—As you enter Oakhurst you will see the sawmill owned and operated by the General Box Company, a subsidiary of the American Box and Lumber Company. Here is produced lumber from trees taken within a 30-mile radius. The better lumber is dried and sold as building lumber while the poor part of the tree is made into "shook," the material used for making fruit boxes. This sawmill produces about 12 million board feet of lumber annually.

(7.5 miles from Coarsegold)

**OAKHURST**—This little community in the mountains near the head of the Fresno River was originally known as Fresno Flats. In 1882 it was reported to be a thriving camp with farming, mining, lumbering and stock raising as principal industries. At that time discovery of a quartz mine seemed to give promise of local prosperity. Apparently little came of it and an undesirable element moved gradually into Fresno Flats and brought it ill-repute. Wishing to do away with this unfavorable past, citizens about 1914 changed the name to Oakhurst.

**OLD LUMBER OPERATIONS**—In 1874 the California Lumber Company operated in the Oakhurst area. Railroads were built to get logs to the sawmill but the problem of getting the lumber from the mill to the San Joaquin Valley was great. As a result the 65-mile Madera flume was built and the City of Madera was founded at the flume terminal in the San Joaquin Valley. The Madera Sugar Pine Company purchased the operation in 1900 and continued in business until 1932 when the low price of lumber made it necessary to abandon the project.

(5.4 miles)

### SIERRA NATIONAL FOREST —

Read description on page 106.

(5.7 miles)

### WESTFALL RANGER STATION—

Westfall Ranger Station in Sierra National Forest is operated by the Forest Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Its main purpose is fire and insect control and timber improvement. A laboratory of the U. S. Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine is also located here to study effects and control of forest insects. The suppression of forest fires in this area of well over one million acres is a cooperative project between the State of California, the U. S. Forest Service, and the National Park Service. The station was originally Miami Ranger Station but was changed about 1940 to Westfall in honor of one of the first forest ranger in this area.

(4.2 miles)

### YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK —

From this point follow the guide for the Wawona Road (in reverse) on page 82, or, turning to the right at the Entrance Station (0.8 miles from park boundary), use the guide for Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias on page 83.



California Wildcat

## SOME WILDLIFE AND PLANTS OF YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

One of the most common animals seen in the park is the mule deer, especially evident in Yosemite Valley and occasionally along roads above the valley. Although less frequently seen, black bear are not uncommon in the valley and are seen occasionally outside of this area. Although these animals are interesting photographic subjects they are still wild animals and are dangerous. Regulations against feeding them are for your protection. You may also see various squirrels and chipmunks, coyotes, bobcats, porcupines, marmots, and a variety of small rodents. Rarely you may catch a glimpse of the mountain lion (cougar). A more complete account of these, together with other kinds of mammals in the park, is given in "Mammals of Yosemite" which, along with "Reptiles and Amphibians of Yosemite National Park" and "Birds of Yosemite," is available at the museums and gift shops.



BLACK OAK—Characterized by the almost clear trunk. It's many spreading branches often 10 feet or more from the ground.



PONDEROSA PINE—Easily recognized by the large jig saw puzzle-like sections of bark.

Lizards and their relatives will be seen scampering over warm rocks at stopping points. Numerous toads and frogs furnish a lusty spring chorus from the wet meadows. Seen infrequently will be snakes, all of which are interesting and even beautiful.

Fishing is an important phase of recreation in the park. The 5 game fish are trout and include rainbow, brown, eastern brook, cutthroat, and golden. You may read more about them in "Fishes of Yosemite."

Thirty-five species of trees are native to the park. Of these 18 are broad-leaved, dropping their leaves in autumn, and 17 cone-bearing evergreens. The dominant forest trees along the park roads are indicated throughout this guide. More complete descriptions can be had in the pamphlets "Cone-bearing Trees" and "Broad-leaved Trees."

Wildflowers along park roads vary according to season and altitude. Common throughout most of the season are blue *lupines*, varying from meadow lupine in dense, short-stemmed stands to large widely separated shrubs. In the valley the four-to-six feet tall *cow parsnip*, with its huge leaves and umbrella-like heads of small white flowers 6 to 10 inches across, are conspicuous in the spring, followed shortly by the reddish-purple flower cluster of the *showy milkweed*, the favorite plant of the migrating monarch butterflies. The well-known *blackeyed susan* is becoming an increasing summer attraction in the valley meadows, giving way in autumn to the delicate, haze-like lilac coloring over the meadow from innumerable *Lessingia*, with their slender stems about 12 inches high. Along dry roadsides above the valley clusters of orange *western wall flowers* will be seen along with groups of the cup-shaped purple or pinkish *farewell-to-spring* and its close relatives. In early summer the wet woodland meadows above the valley are attractive with mass displays of the rose pink *Sierra shooting star* intermingled with the yellow of the daisy-like *senecio*, the *brodiaea*, *buttercup*, common *monkey flower*, the blue of the *western blue flag*, *mountain bluebell*, *Sierra forget-me-not*, *blue camas*, and the red of the *gilia* and the scarlet *mimulus*. "Mountain Misery," more properly known as its Indian name Kit-kit-dizze, is a low fernlike plant with finely divided foliage forming fragrant carpets in the open pine forests of the middle and lower elevations. The odor is noticeable on warm days especially along the road between Wawona and the South Entrance Station.

Conspicuous in upland meadows is the *corn lily* growing in patches with leaves 6 to 12 inches long. When young it looks like a form of skunk cabbage but later develops a 3 to 6-foot high stem supporting an attractive mass of small white flowers. With the approach of autumn the leaves die and form patches of straw-colored dried-up vegetation.

One of the most amazing and attractive plants in the park is the rare blood-red *snow plant* found growing out of the litter on the floor of pine forests until near the end of June, depending on the altitude. It is protected by both park regulations and State law. (The pamphlet "Common Wildflowers of Yosemite" will give you further information about flowers.)



LODGEPOLE PINE—Can be identified by the relatively smooth bark.

Illustrations in this pamphlet are credited as follows: To **Ralph Anderson**: Three Brothers, p. 69, Yosemite Falls, p. 70, Half Dome, p. 71, Sentinel Rock, p. 76, El Capitan and Bridalveil Fall, p. 77, Exfoliating Granite, p. 80, Covered Bridge, p. 81, Grizzly Giant, p. 83, Mariposa Grove Museum, p. 84, Exhibit and Overlook at Glacier Point, p. 92, Carl Inn, p. 95, Ancient Folded Rocks, p. 106, California Wildcat, p. 110; **Volney J. Westley**: Features from Valley View, p. 68; **Ralph dePtyffer**: Mirror Lake in Spring, p. 72; **Onas Ward**: Royal Arches, North Dome and Washington Column, p. 73, and Yosemite Valley from Tunnel Overlook, p. 78; **Garibaldi**—courtesy of **Laurence Degenon**: Scene in Old Yosemite Village, p. 74; **Henry G. Peabody**: General View of Wawona and Wawona Hotel, p. 82; **Donald E. McHenry**: Merced Canyon View, p. 88; **Wayne W. Bryant**: Profile of Clark Range, p. 89, Profile of High Sierra from Glacier Point, p. 90, Profile of Skyline from Dana Meadow, p. 103; **Dorothy Mayer**: Features of Yosemite Valley from Glacier Point, p. 91; **Celia Crocker Thompson**—courtesy of **Margaret Schlichtmann**: Hadgdon's Historic Ranch, p. 94; **Celia Crocker Thompson**: Former Gobin's Hotel, p. 96; **Robert N. McIntyre**: Siesta Lake, Old Tioga Road, p. 97, Mt. Hoffman, p. 99; courtesy of **Mrs. Emma Footman**: Madera Flume, p. 109; **Ansel Adams**: Ponderosa Pine and Black Oak, p. 111, Lodgepole Pine, p. 112. All other illustrations are either from the National Park Service collection or are of unknown origin.

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*Yosemite*

*Nature Notes*

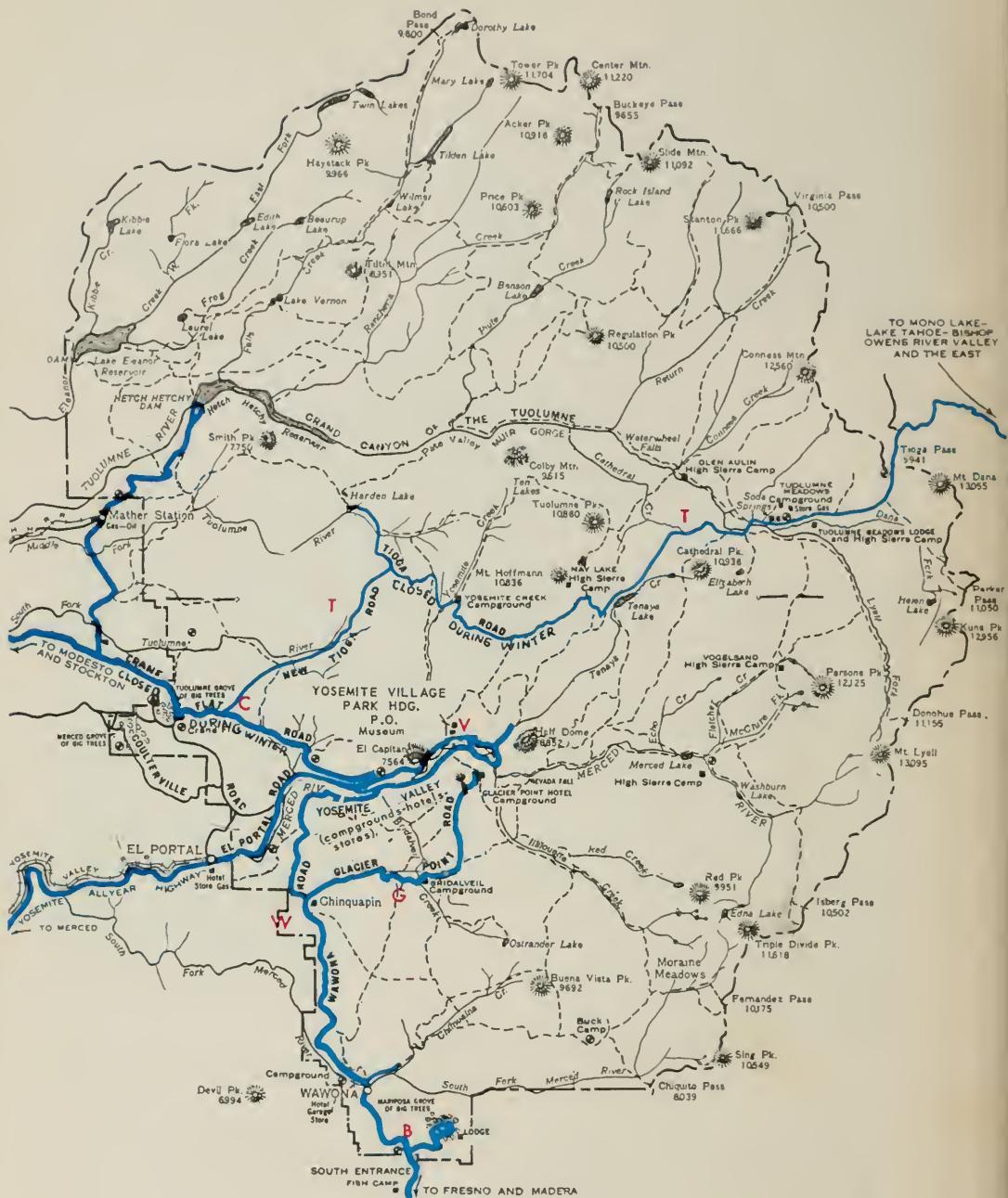
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## YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

MAPS OF ROUTES COVERED BY THIS SELF-GUIDING AUTO TOUR.

(Letters refer to the section of the book which describes that particular road).